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Ramparts

November 1967
Seventy-five Cents

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STONE GARDEN

PIPE DREAMS

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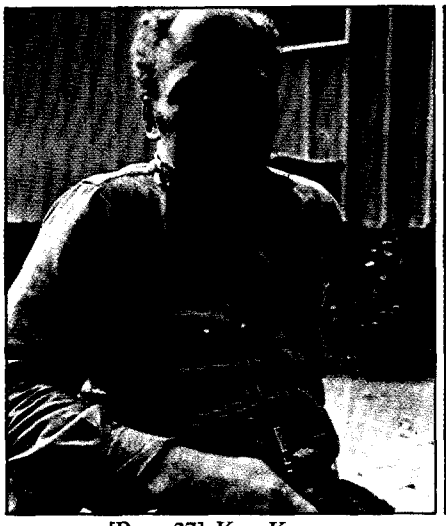

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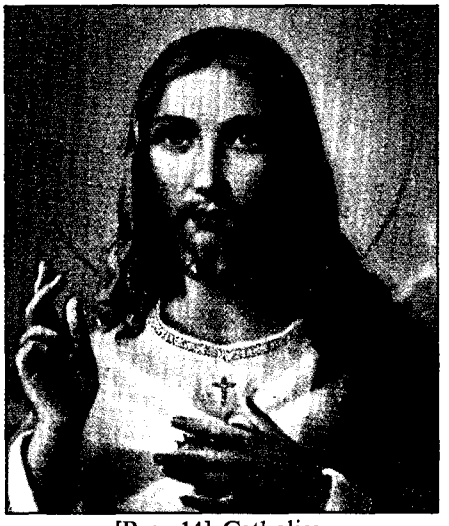

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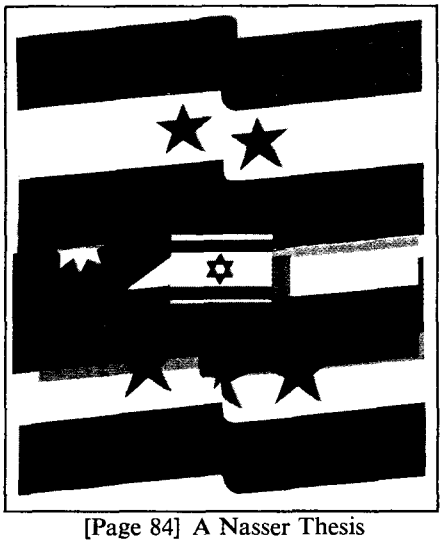

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Ramparts

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Apologia:

COUNT JOSEPH DE MAISTRE, a reactionary and pessimistic man, once said: "One is *always* mistaken when one says that things can get no worse."

With that as our text for the month, we do not hesitate to remind you that RAMPARTS recently played Cassandra on the following news items:

1) "McNamara's Wall" across South Vietnam, first reported by Senior Editor David Welsh writing from Laos (RAMPARTS, July 1967).

2) The total takeover of Vietnam decision-making by the military at the expense of traditional civilian control, now widely discussed by the pundits but first postulated by Contributing Editor Marcus Raskin (RAMPARTS, July 1967).

3) Nasser's split with the more radical Syrian and Algerian regimes, first reported by Managing Editor Robert Scheer cabling from Cairo (RAMPARTS, September 1967).

So, alright. But what have we done for you lately?

Last month Consulting Editor Stanley K. Sheinbaum smuggled in from Greece the Junta's two key witnesses against Andreas Papandreou. They admitted (RAMPARTS, October 1967) that their testimony was wholly perjured. Well, this month Sheinbaum smuggled in the secret text of the Papandreou indictment which proves that the Junta's case rests on the admitted false witness. What we want to know now is if Sheinbaum has to smuggle in the entire Junta before the State Department takes due notice of the fact that they are fascists.

Normally we stay as far away from a symposium as from the nearest leprosarium, but the collection of dissident opinions (p. 99) on the New Politics nonconvention in Chicago seemed the only thing to do about that bizarre happening. If you are confused when you finish reading it, you will then have something in common with almost everyone who was there.

Do not be misled by all those Catholics on the cover. RAMPARTS is not returning to the womb and becoming a Catholic magazine again. It is all part of an elaborate plot to confuse our enemies, who are already confused, about what we are.—W.H.

COVER: Top Left; Bishop Fulton J. Sheen by Karsh. Top Right; Fr. William DuBay by Samerjan. Bottom Left; Fr. James Groppi by Ted Rozumalski. Bottom Right; Jesus Christ.

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Marginalia

Letters:

A WAR OF WORDS

SIRS: I have just returned from a three-month stay in Israel where I was working as a civilian volunteer. I think that the usually perceptive Mr. Scheer [RAMPARTS, September 1967], as well as others, in their urge to assert their anti-imperialistic, anti-colonialistic fervor, have badly overlooked or at best glossed over many of the vital facts pertaining to the current crisis.

Much of the anti-Establishment press in their almost frantic effort to assert their opposition to Western imperialism has glorified President Nasser as the benevolent, kindly and humane hero of the Arab social revolution. This of course is not exactly the entire picture. Certainly Nasser has instituted some reforms which have been honest attempts to improve the position of the Egyptian lower classes. What I do find very disturbing is the tendency of many leftist intellectuals to overlook the guise of social revolution under which Nasser has maintained his power. Nasser has used the appeal of Arab nationalism and social reform to pacify jail critics, outlaw all political opposition, to wage his own imperialistic war complete with poison gas in Yemen. That Mr. Scheer should only mention casually that any political reform depends solely upon the whim of a dictator trying to protect his own personality cult seems strange indeed. To thus defend dictatorship under the guise of maintaining stability, seems rather strange from Mr. Scheer, when the same type of hogwash coming from General Ky brings such an avalanche of well-deserved criticism.

Mr. Scheer then puts the full onus of the refugee problem on the Israelis. The problem is indeed a serious one and one that must be solved if peace is to come to the area. But it has been the Arabs who have stoutly resisted any overtures to try to negotiate a reasonable settlement of the solution. The Egyptians have refused to let the refugees immigrate to Egypt; it is they who have kept them in tent towns in Gaza, in poverty and schooled in hatred, so that the convenient whipping boy, Israel, is handy in any crisis. I have seen school books in Gaza where children are taught math in the standard manner—if you have nine Jews, you kill six and two escape, how many do you have left?

And for Mr. Scheer to imply that Israel acted as the unwitting agent of American interests is ridiculous. All through Israel one theme was evident, and that was when the chips were down, when Israel faced annihilation, It Stood Alone. One by one, her allies, when faced with the choice between Israel's possible slaughter or possible loss of Arab oil, all eventually chose the oil.

GUSTIN REICHBACH
Brooklyn, New York

SIRS: Robert Scheer's report on Egypt is by far the best that I have seen, but his portrayal of Nasser suggests that he is too close to the trunk to see the tree. Let it be recalled that Nasser is the man who has poisoned the villagers of the Yemen with a horrible gas, that his intervention there is no less infamous than ours in Vietnam. Suffice it to say that the emblem of Nasser as a gentle spirit is no more congruous than an angel in hell. What Scheer has done, besides presenting a wealth of information, is to explain exactly why Nasser will eventually be assassinated.

MARK FLOMENHOFT
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

SIRS: Thank you for the articles in the July edition devoted to the Mideast crisis, particularly "Israel is not Vietnam" by Walzer and Peretz.

It was assumed that the hawks would be delighted at the dilemma in which the Vietnam critics found themselves while advocating intervention in Aqaba. But it comes as a shock to observe the left damn Israel as the aggressor.

I have always found myself in sympathy with the international revolutions against domestic and foreign exploitation. The fact that our own country plays the role of consistently supporting the most backward and cruel governments all over the world makes for a certain emotional difficulty in taking a position for the revolutionaries, since we all want our country to be the right, the just and the good one. However, we are taught to obey our intelligence rather than the more basic instinct of chauvinism, and the fact is that our policies toward countries like Cuba and Vietnam are primitive and bestial and toward China crude and stupid.

However, just because I feel sympathy and even admiration for the revolutions of the underdeveloped nations doesn't mean that I find hypocrisy and political immorality on their part any more palatable than I do on that of my own government. The inescapable fact is that the Arabs openly advocate genocide as the solution to the Mideast difficulties while Israel advocates peace treaties and offers cooperation in solving the plight of the Arab refugees.

This letter is not written by a Jew and I don't believe I have any reason to be biased.

ERIC NELSON
San Francisco, California

MISCELLANEOUS FILTH

SIRS: Ha. HA HA. Obviously I am still chuckling with warm mirth over Avant-Garde's two-page proposition in your September (sic) issue. I somehow managed to resist the tempting offer; it struck my squeamish ears a bit too much like the pitiful epitaph of an embryo.

I remain unseduced (except by another strong issue of RAMPARTS).

DONALD FOLEY
Berkeley, California.

SIRS: It was clever of Warren Hinckle to call his comments in the September issue "Apologia"—to prepare us squares for

Illustrations by Benedict Kocian

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his four-letter word anecdote about Dorothy Parker. Anyway, Hinckle's comments are sophomoric.

Somebody should tell him that RAMPARTS is not the magazine of the men's room. Most readers don't use obscenity in their own private conversations, and have contempt for those who do.

ANDREW GIBSON
White Rock, British Columbia

SIRS: My first impression of your magazine was that it is a disgrace to any American. I was totally surprised when one of your ads celebrated the Bolshevik Revolution and on top of that sold posters of Marx, Stalin, Lenin, Castro.

I must say RAMPARTS is an expensive way to spread Communist propaganda. I was also shocked at the way you pictured President Johnson as a hawk, a dictator, and a warmonger.

I am utterly shocked and I promise to spread how uncouth this magazine is.

RANDY MIGUE
West Nyack, New York

BUTTONS!

ALL THE WAY WITH LBJ
(picture of A-Bomb)

CHASTE MAKES WASTE

CURE VIRGINITY

GO NAKED

GUNS DON'T KILL PEOPLE,
PEOPLE KILL PEOPLE

IF IT MOVES, FONDLE IT

I PROTEST

JEWISH POWER

KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL:
HIDE LADYBIRD

MAKE LOVE—NOT WAR

male symbol with arrow piercing
female symbol

psychedelic ban-the-bomb symbol

SEXUAL FREEDOM LEAGUE:
FLY UNITED

SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH
OR I'LL KILL YOU

USE CONTRACEPTIVES: TAKE THE
WORRY OUT OF BEING CLOSE

WAR IS GOOD BUSINESS:
INVEST YOUR SON

WARNING: YOUR LOCAL POLICE
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WHERE IS LEE HARVEY OSWALD
NOW THAT WE REALLY NEED HIM?

WOULD YOU REALLY FEEL MORE
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STERN REMARKS

SIRS: As a young white man with a black girlfriend, I was much moved by "America's Black Guerrillas" [RAMPARTS, September 1967]. I have at times had a few ideas about a (black) revolution in America; but I never ever thought of something like that really occurring. (For, if it did ever erupt, what should I do, where should I go?)

America is a racist society, has strong authoritarian tendencies, is very reactionary and inhumane. But should it be destroyed, *since it does provide the essential goods for the majority of Americans?*

I believe in revolutions in southern Africa, Latin America, and Asia—"When reforms are impossible, Revolutions become inevitable." But, is America beyond hope? I do not know.

DEAN P. SELOCK JR.
Blue Island, Illinois

SIRS: Sol Stern, in "America's Black Guerrillas" explains Governor Hughes' use of the term "insurrection" as a device to get The Prudential Insurance Company and others "off the hook for liabilities if damage is caused by insurrection."

I would like to point out that whether the Newark riot is called a fist fight, an insurrection, or World War III, Prudential and other life insurance companies do not stand to benefit. We sell life and health insurance and a variety of annuity plans. We do not insure property, only *people of all sizes, shapes, and colors.*

RICHARD F. BREGSTEIN
External Affairs Department,
Prudential Insurance Co.
Newark, New Jersey

SIRS: I read Sol Stern's article, "America's Black Guerrillas" in the September issue with great interest. However I am somewhat mystified with the conclusion. For three pages, the author argues that America must recognize the guerrilla nature of the Black Power Movement. In the final paragraph, he claims that American society must "confront" this reality. Such a "confrontation" leaves only two alternatives: to destroy the guerrillas or to pull out.

THOMAS TROBE
Cambridge, Massachusetts

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... to discover yourself,
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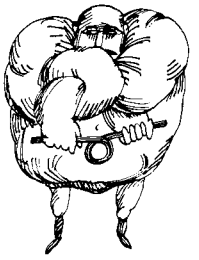


ALICE IN JUNKLAND

Notes by Jonathan Middlebrook

Question: Why do you make these things?
I got started about a year ago. I needed furniture and made a chair. Then a bigger one. Then a bigger one. The last one was 14 feet high, weighed 500 pounds, was carried by five strong men, and cleared the entrance to the Hilton Ballroom by one inch.

Q. Background?
My name is David Wise. My father is a furrier in Hamilton, Ontario. I'm 22 and study sociology here at Berkeley. When my father heard of the success of the show here, he sent me four books of sales slips. But you know what he says about my stuff? "You want a chair, get a pattern. Someone else has already made the mistakes." He hates my stuff. He says it's far bigger than I need.

Q. Training?
I take art classes, but I'm afraid of getting kicked out. The art professors say my work is functional. You know, I never get A's. B's, B-'s. I took my first art class because I heard they had naked ladies posing. The instructor's very hostile, and so inarticulate. He doesn't like it, so it's bad art. Only my friends like it. My roommate.

Q. Materials?
I mostly get them from junkyards. Concrete reinforcing rods, sheet metal, heavy chunks of metal. Also wood, and plastic. And I do upholstery at a place here called the Do-It-Yourself Upholsterette. They don't like the way I put on my cushions there: I don't mathematically center them. At the junkyards I come in with overalls and a hat to cover my long hair and they treat me like one of them. But it gets funny when I begin to get excited—all this beauty around them, in junk. I don't hide it. I say what a beautiful piece of metal, and they look at me like I'm crazy.

Q. Technique?
I work very fast. Maybe a day for each piece. Except the Chair of Sociology. The 500-pound one. That took three weeks and was very hard work. You should see the tools in the shop. Torches, saws, presses, kilns. Sometimes I take a piece of plexiglass and melt it over something in the kiln. It drips and runs into the metal. It's great stuff. And I burn wood a lot now, and melt brazing rod onto surfaces. I use acids for color. Also a lot of work with the torch. Just the lightest tick of a flame on sheet metal and there's a little hole. It's an art.

Q. Shows?
At the Magnus Museum. That's the Jewish Museum of the West, in Berkeley. I also had a show here at Cal and sell a lot of stuff for the Community for New Politics. You might call my things new left wing sculpture.

Q. Favorite pieces?
I like Kinder Yoren best. That's Childhood Years. I really make Alice-in-Wonderland things. Everything that's big is reminiscent of when you're little. I remember all these things, and then make them. My things are all judified. I make lots of menorahs, and I Jewished up my medieval sconce by putting seven candles on it.

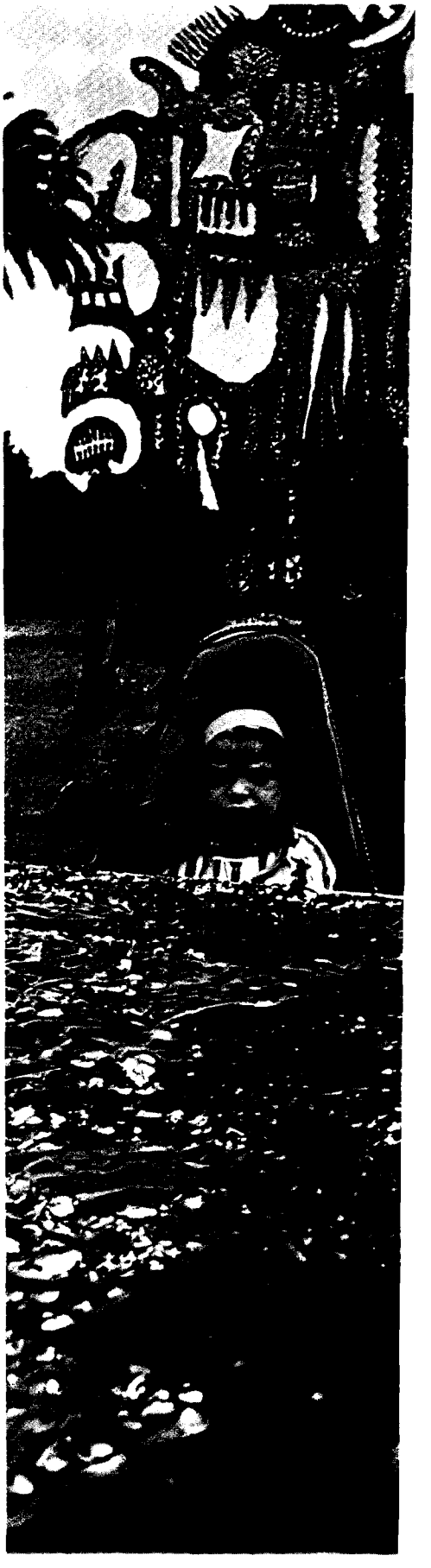
Q. Titles?
They're largely jokes, like Heavy Jewish Lamp—it's an 80-pound piece of scrap—and Breakfast Nook for that table and ten-foot chairs.

Q. Commissioned work?
After the Berkeley show I must have had a hundred commissions. I'm not going to take any more. I'll make things, and if people want them, they can buy them. Otherwise it's too commercial. I get anxious that I can't please people.

Q. Future plans?
I'll get a Ph.D. in sociology.

Q. Why?
Art is lonely, limited, dirty—it's no fun. Like being a car mechanic, only you make your own car. But I'm afraid of the equipment I have to use. Huge saws, torches—terrible things. Each piece I get an average of three cuts, two burns. I like the product, but the conditions for making it stink. It's dirty work—I'm always having to change clothes, and I don't have many. And I have to move the stuff afterwards. Five hundred pounds! It's a rotten life. Artists never talk.

Mr. Middlebrook teaches English at the University of California at Berkeley.



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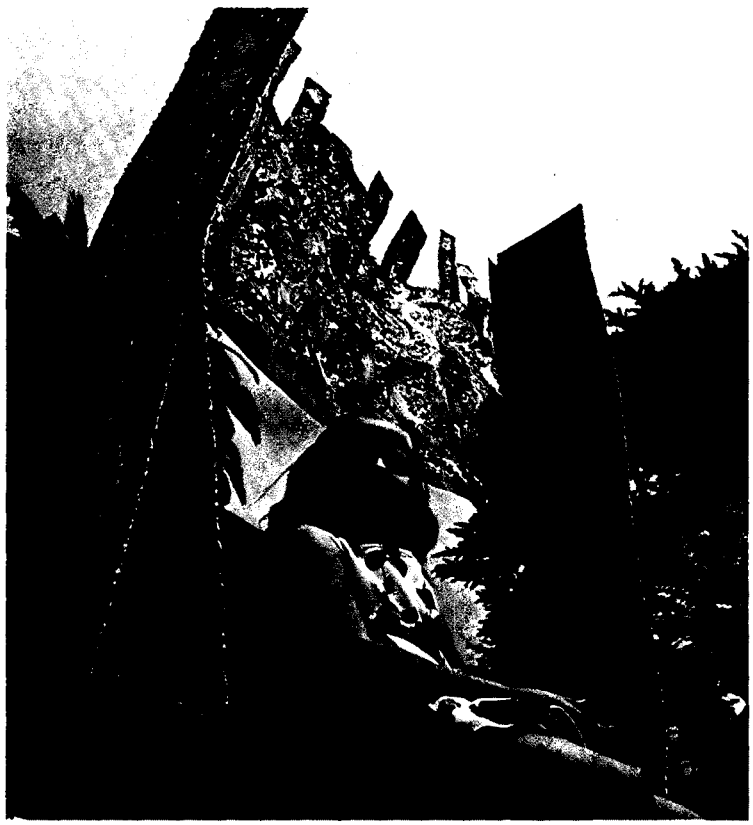

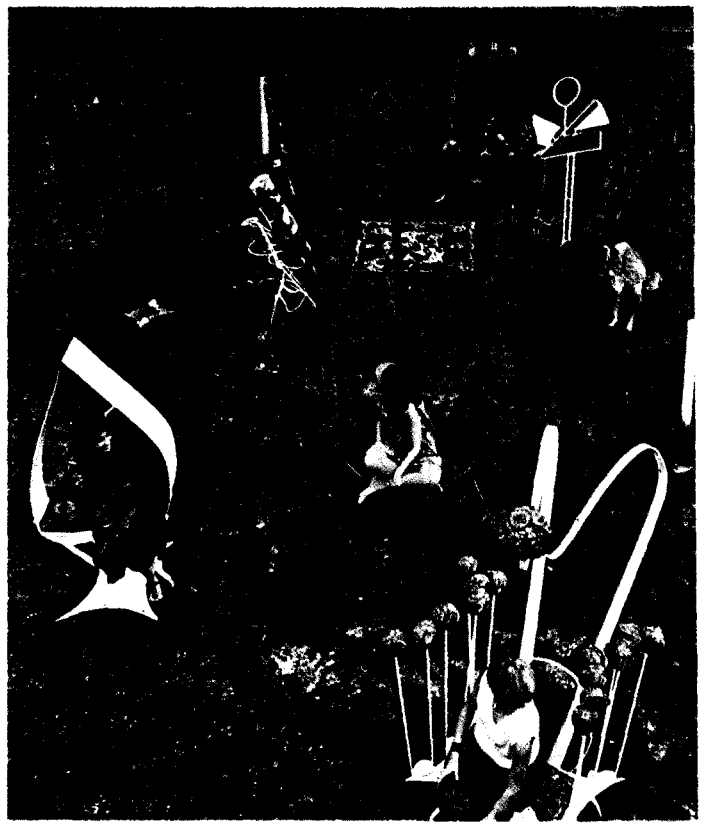

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Recordings:

"I READ THE NEWS TODAY, OH BOY."

by Nat Hentoff

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band by The Beatles. Capitol Records. $5.79, Mono and Stereo.

You see, we haven't really started yet, the Beatles. The future stretches out beyond our imagination. There is musical infinity as well. We've only just discovered what we can do as musicians. What threshold we can cross. It doesn't matter so much anymore if we're No. 1 or on the chart. It's all right if the people dislike us. Just don't deny us.—GEORGE HARRISON

As the rush to *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* confirmed, the Beatles are now Art. Jack Kroll, Newsweek's analyst of Now Culture, proclaimed "A Day in the Life" to be "the Beatles' 'Waste Land.' " In the New Statesman, composer-critic-musicologist Wilfred Mellers devoted an entire column to an exegesis of the themes of loneliness that make the album "art of an increasingly subtle kind."

The Beatles, moreover, are Functional Art. Said the Times Educational Supplement (of London): "Lennon and McCartney's lyrics represent an important barometer to our society—sentiments which are shared by pupils in every classroom in Britain . . . If the record's understanding were to be reflected in Britain's teachers, our schools might be more sympathetic institutions than some are now." In echo, a school superintendent this past July told a conference of music educators in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, how to start their journey across that alarmingly widening generational gap: "If you want to know what youths are thinking and feeling, you cannot find anyone who speaks for them or to them more clearly than the Beatles." Said Beatles even speak for and to the dead. At the funeral in August of murdered British playwright Joe Orton, the Beatles' recording of "A Day in the Life" started the decidedly secular service.

And yet three years ago, Paul McCartney insisted, "We have no message and aren't trying to deliver one." What *is* the message now? On one level, it's not quite clear, even within the company of the four gurus. Tim Leary announces: "The Beatles have taken my place. That latest album—a complete celebration of LSD." And Paul McCartney, who has indeed taken LSD, says: "After I took it, it opened my eyes. We only use one tenth of our brain. Just think what all we could accomplish if we could only tap that hidden part! It would mean a whole new world. If the politicians would take LSD, there wouldn't be any more war, or poverty."

But George Harrison, once a trip-taker, tells the Los Angeles Free Press: "Acid is not the answer, definitely not the answer. It's enabled people to see a little bit more, but when you really get hip you don't need it." And John Lennon, who has also journeyed somewhere into himself through acid, laughs when told that hippies, actual and acolyte, take the initials of "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" as a hortatory message. "No," he says, "my son, Julian, brought a painting home from school and said it was a picture of Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds." So what is the message? Look up in the sky—and live.

On another level, however, the message is clear and Beatles-consensual enough. Writing of the *Sgt. Pepper* implosion, Paul Williams, editor of Crawdaddy, the higher critic of the new sounds and feelings, asserts: "If there's a message, it's 'Dig Yourself.' " With a little help from your friends. It's getting better all the time, and it doesn't really matter if you're wrong or right.

But that's not all. There is also death. The Beatles are, up to a point, hip to death, more so than any other *popular* music group has ever been. Eleanor Rigby is dead long before the obsequies. And death grins in "A Day in the Life" of the man who blew his mind out in a car. In the same song, the deaths of miners in Lancaster become "four thousand holes . . . and though the holes were rather small they had to count them all."

The man in the car is bloody well dead, the crowd of people who stood and stared has turned away, the miners are in holes, but "though the news was rather

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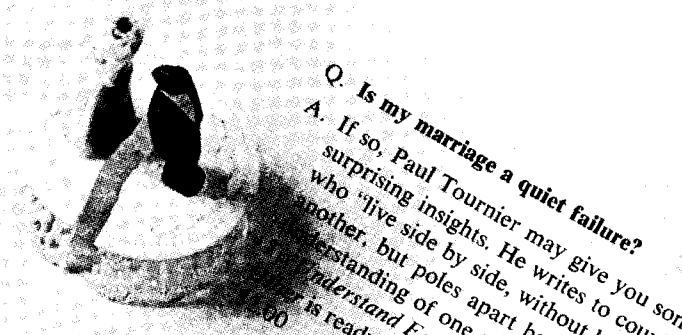
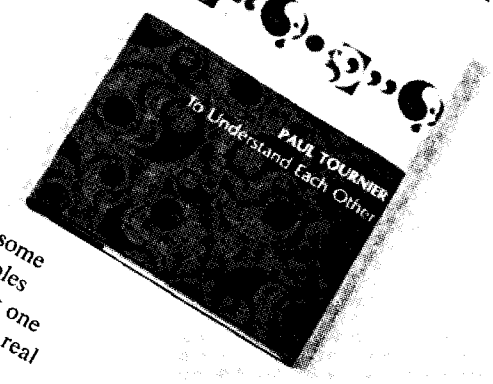
Ask yourself these four questions:





Q. Is my marriage a quiet failure?
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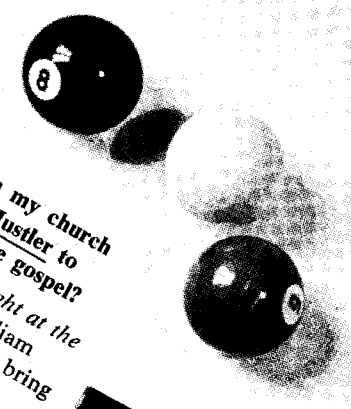

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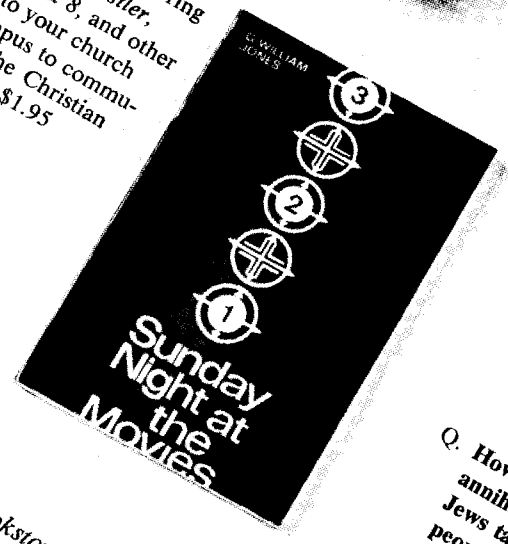

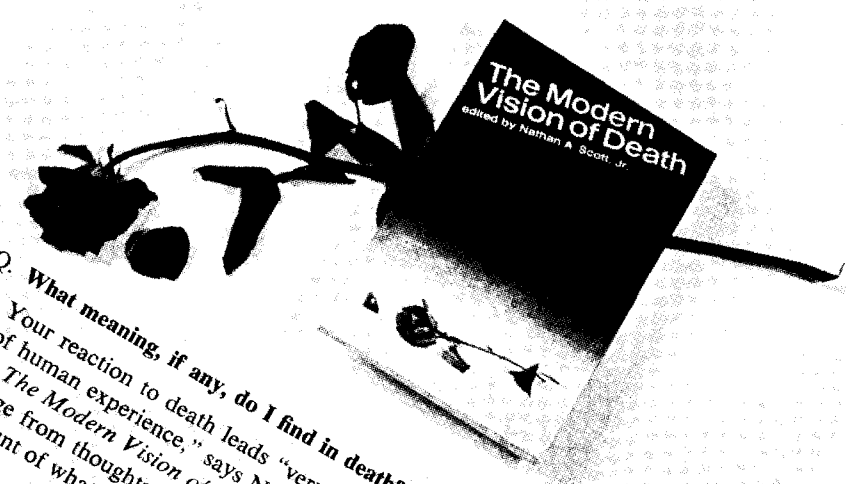

Q. What meaning, if any, do I find in death?
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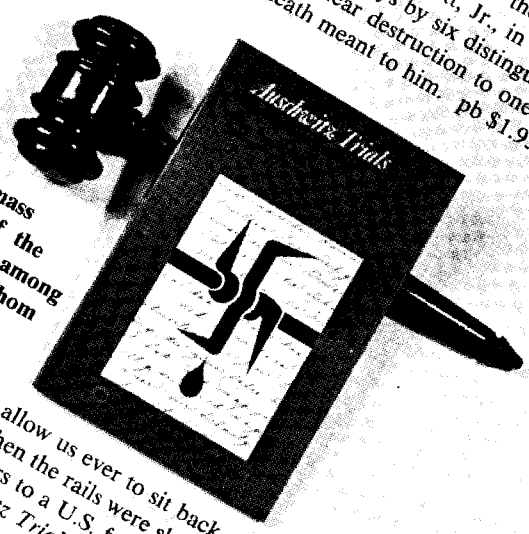

Q. How could mass annihilation of the Jews take place among people 95% of whom were baptized Christians?
A. "This very fact will not allow us ever to sit back and rest until we have found where and when the rails were shunted wrong," says Emmi Bonhoeffer. In letters to a U.S. friend she gives her impressions of the *Auschwitz Trials* and describes her experiences with some of the witnesses. pb $1.00

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sad/Well I just had to laugh. I saw the photograph." Thus the auto-anesthesia of us all, who will not see pain, who will not believe in death, and who are disappointed when the news is *not* of pain and death. But could the song also show the Beatles' own auto-anesthesia? Having seen pain and having thought of death, do they turn to save themselves—and their friends—through magic?

Magic? Wilfred Mellers finds one common bond in the music of Boulez, Cage, Bob Dylan and the Beatles—"an attempt to return to magic, possibly as a substitute for belief." In an interview with Miles in the International Times, Paul McCartney says: "With any kind of thing, my aim seems to be to distort it, distort it from what we know it as, even with music and visual things and to change it from what it *is* to see what it *could* be. To see the potential in it all. To take a note and wreck it and see in that note what else there is in it, that a simple act like distorting it has caused. To take a film and to superimpose on top of it so you can't quite tell what it is anymore, it's all trying to create magic, it's all trying to make things happen so that you don't know why they've happened."

And George Harrison, anxious for serenity, talks about being only 24 "in this incarnation," and goes on: "We're Beatles, and it's a little scene and we're playing and we're pretending to be Beatles, like Harold Wilson's pretending to be Prime Minister . . . They're all playing. The Queen is the Queen. The idea that you could wake up and it happens that you're Queen, it's amazing but you could all be Queens if you imagine it . . . they'll have a war quickly if it gets too good, they'll just pick on the nearest person to save us from our doom. That's it, soon as you freak out and have a good time, it's dangerous, but they don't think of the danger of going into some other country in a tank with a machine-gun and shooting someone. That's all legal and aboveboard, but you can't freak out —that's stupid."

Magic is dangerous to the world, but the world is more dangerous to the Beatles—and to their friends. And so, there is the leap into the magic of the loving community. We all live in our yellow submarine and our friends are all on board. With our love—we could save the world—if they only knew. [But since they don't know] "Turn off your mind, relax, and float downstream. It is not dying, it is not dying." In this, the Beatles and the hippies are together in a search for peace.

And so the Beatles no longer speak to the very young who do not yet know how dangerous the world is, how efficiently numbing, how full of little boxes for them. The very young have turned to the plastic Monkees; but the older teens and many in their twenties and beyond are listening. On the other hand, the *Revolver* disc was dismissed by a class in a large industrially-centered English school with the words: "Aw no, sir, we don't like that: it's all *Chinky*."

Beatles records are not on the jukeboxes in the black ghettos nor, I expect, are they the food of magic for those in the lower tracks of any of our schools. Those young abandoned magic with Santa Claus. The Beatles are increasingly for the comfortable and afraid—afraid to be lonely, afraid to be Eleanor Rigby. It is true, as Frank Kofsky writes in the National Guardian, "There are millions of devout followers of Dylan, the Stones, the Beatles, and all the rest, who are in opposition to the society that spawned them and are, in the words of a Jefferson Airplane song, 'trying to revolutionize tomorrow.' In hippie communities like San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury, they strive to realize the new socialist man (my label, not theirs) who will be capable of fulfilling to the limit the creative potential of the human race, especially in the arts."

But, even with a little help from their friends, will these revolutionizers of tomorrow—through love, through consciousness-expansion, through digging themselves on their yellow submarine—change what's happening out there? Even if you could spike LBJ's root beer with LSD, what then?

However, as for expanding creative potential among those in the beloved community, the Beatles are indeed among the liberators. They started nibbling at Carl Perkins, Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley. (In that incarnation, George Harrison also picked up on Chet Atkins and Duane Eddy.) They were less black-inflected than the Animals and the Rolling Stones; but along with them and other young British rockers brushed by the blues, the Beatles turned millions of American adolescents onto what had been here all the hurting time. But the young here never did want it raw so they absorbed it through the British filter. Oh yes, some later found Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf and now they're into their own kind of greyboating with Paul Butterfield and Mike Bloomfield and Big Brother and the Holding Company, but that's a trip, as it has to be, with a return ticket. I mean, Shankar is beloved, but if he put an evening raga on you at high noon, would you know?

Anyway, the Beatles went on—into and through Buddy Holly, the Nashville communion, Bob Dylan, the Who, the Beach Boys. They were getting to where, as Paul McCartney put it, they could be

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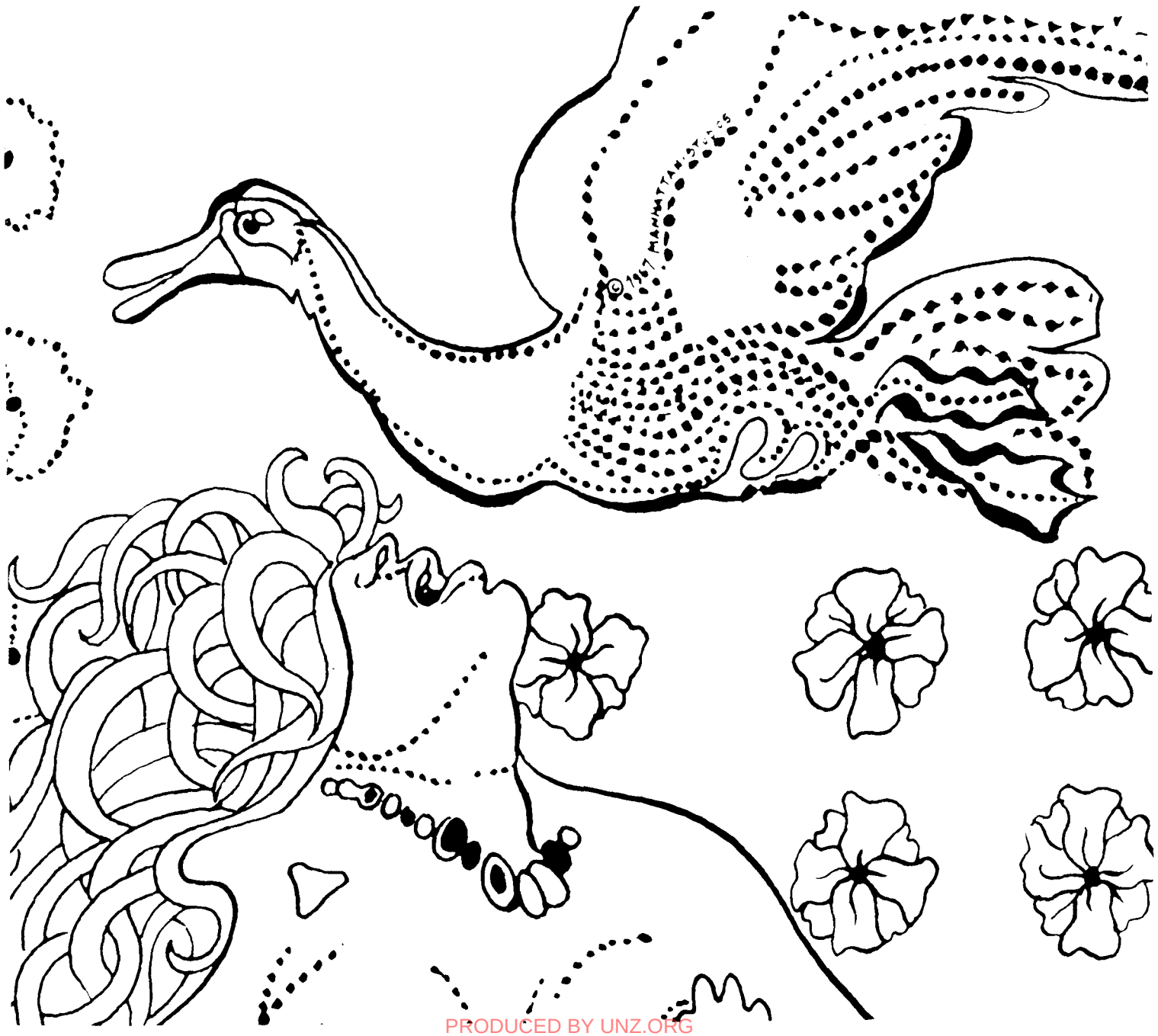

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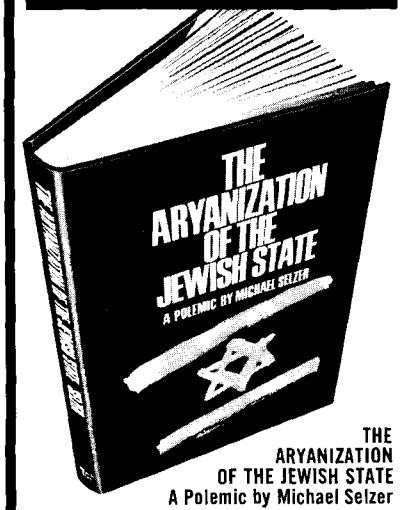

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influenced by themselves. And in their wake they left behind the fake imperatives of the 32-bar tune, "consonant" changes, steady tempos. Harmonies shifted vertiginously, their early modalities grew strange branches, voicings continually surprised themselves, and uncommonly ecumenical textures appeared —the sitar in "Norwegian Wood," guitar tracks running backwards on "I'm Only Sleeping," sitar and electronic sounds in "Love You Too," more electronics in "Tomorrow Never Knows." Writing of the latter, Mellers discovered "a new sonorous experience in amalgamating avant-garde jazz (Mingus-like jungle noises, Cage-like electronics, folk pentatonicism, Indian sitars)." And in the Mellotron overlay in "Penny Lane," he wondered if Lennon and McCartney had been digging Charles Ives.

Sgt. Pepper has further disintegrated paper categories and boundaries to get to where the Beatles could *hear* where they belong at the moment. Their first album had been recorded in one day. This one, with four to six sessions a week, evolved through more than three months, and is the most heterogeneous, heady mix of possibilities in pop music history. Combs and paper over a string octet and harp on "Lovely Rita"; multiple tracks of percussion and strings into which sitar, tamboura and swormandel are imbedded, swirling between 4/4 and 5/4 on "Within You Without You." Three tambouras, a dilruba, a tabla, an Indian table-harp, a sitar (Harrison), three cellos, and eight violins on "She's Leaving Home"; Lennon on Hammond organ, recorded at different speeds and then overlaid with electronic echoes, while four harmonicas disport in Being for the "Benefit of Mr. Kite." And on and on to the 41-piece orchestra in "A Day in the Life" with, as Jack Kroll exults, "a growling, bone-grinding crescendo that drones up like a giant crippled turbine struggling to spin new power into a foundered civilization."

Where now? The next move, says Paul McCartney, "seems to be things like electronics because it's a complete new field and there's a lot of good new sounds to be listened to in it. But if the music itself is just going to jump about five miles ahead, then everyone's going to be left standing with this gap of five miles that they've got to all cross before they can even see what scene these people are on . . . That's what I'd like to do, I'd like to look into that gap a bit." As George Harrison says, "You see, we haven't really started yet, the Beatles. The future stretches out beyond our imagination."

The Beatles are absolutely fre-e-e. "The competition among the best—Bob Dylan, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, among them—is no longer for money," observes pop chronicler Al Aronowitz in the Saturday Evening Post. "They already have enough of that. The competition is in music . . . The best artists in the business—the aristocracy—are moving into positions of power. They're making fewer and fewer compromises with commercialism. There's hardly anything interesting happening outside this exclusive circle."

Meanwhile Rap Brown tries to find the revolution and the strategists of the New Politics scour the new class for their constituency. But to the Beatles, are they for real? Why be up-tight about anything? "At the back of my brain somewhere," Paul McCartney says, "there is something telling me now that . . . it tells me in a cliché too, it tells me that everything is beautiful." And so it may be. Who can put down magic that works for the magician?

Must everything be related constantly to the non-psychedelic world? I keep thinking about the Beatles as "an important barometer to our society," and I remember Donald Michael predicting in *The Next Generation* that the control centers "will be able to tolerate groups living at different paces and styles, if they show no deliberate intent to alter significantly the drive or direction of the prevailing social processes . . . Isolated and insulated from major and majority preoccupations of the society, and thereby offering no threat to the *status quo*, these enclaves will provide opportunities for more whimsical, personally paced styles of life."

But what the hell, like the rest of us with stereo, the Beatles get by with a little help from their friends and they do live up to their promise: "A splendid time is guaranteed for all." The music's getting better all the time as the indignant desert birds hover about the shape with a lion body and the head of a man.

Nat Hentoff's most recent book was Our Children Are Dying. *He is on the staff of the New Yorker and currently working on his second novel.*

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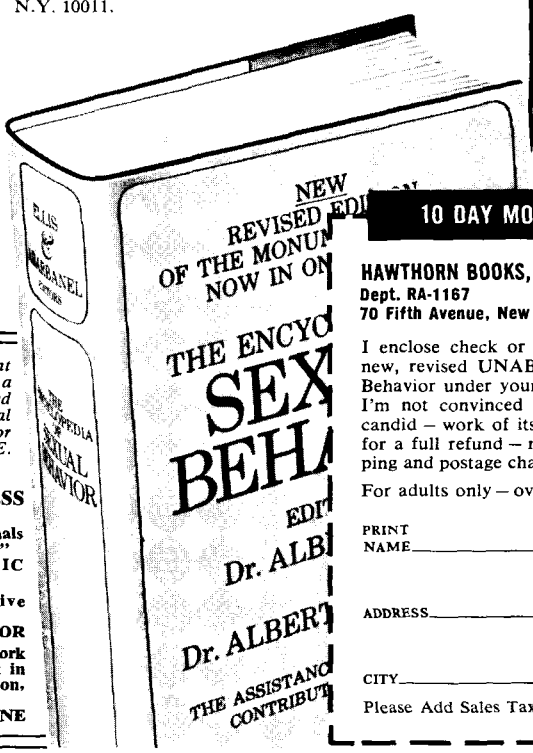

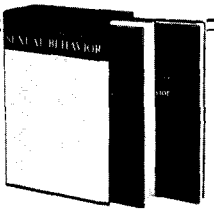

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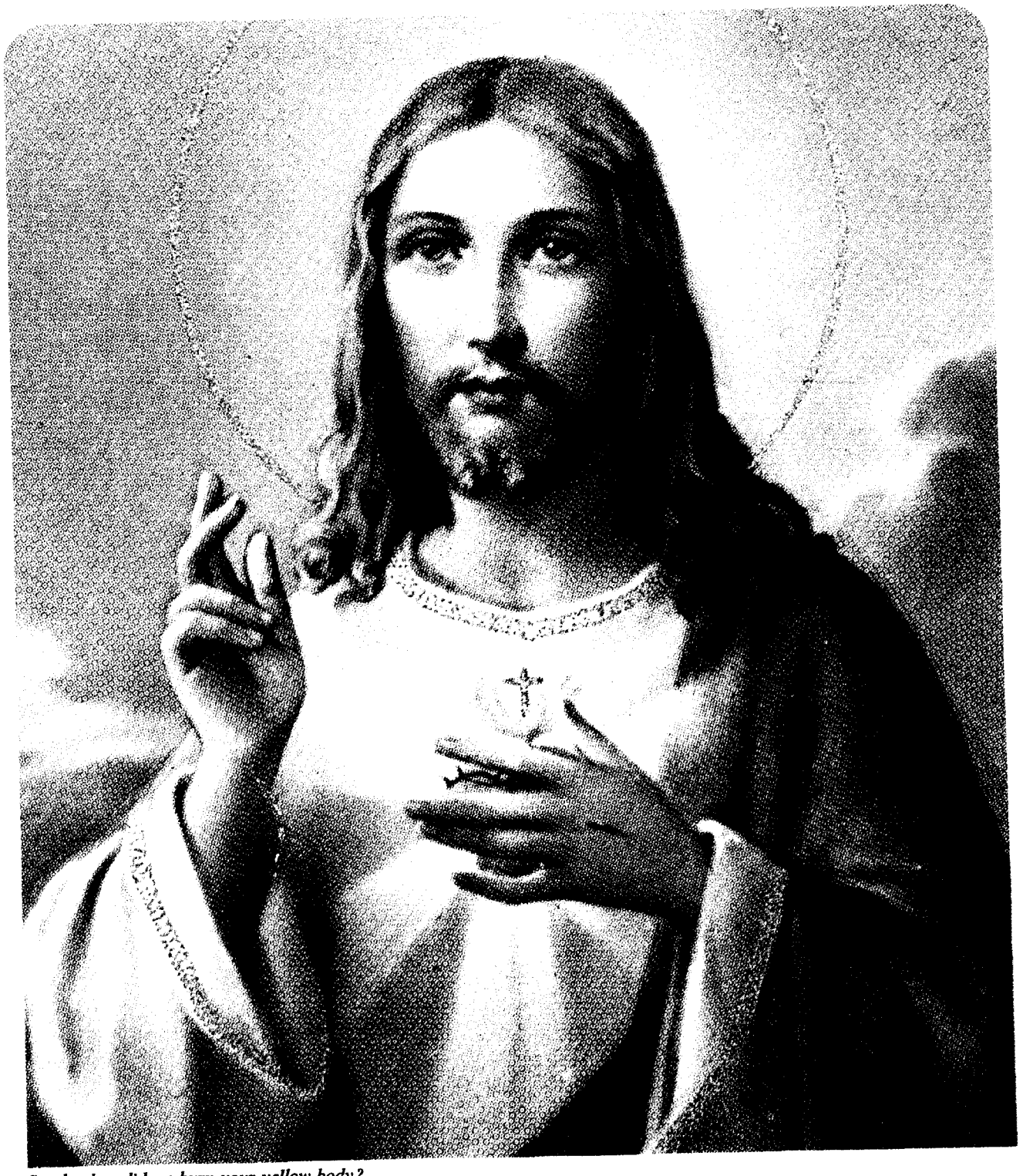
Left Wing Catholics



Lord, when did we burn your yellow body?
Lord, when did we train our youth to torture you?
Lord, when did we bomb you in the name of peace?
—Contemporary Catholic Ejaculation to Jesus

by Warren Hinckle

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IF Cardinal Spellman Himself had announced in favor of homosexuality, it could not have been more unexpected. Fulton Sheen—the great, gray eminence of the early days of the tube, who stood up there Sunday nights against Milton Berle and Ed Sullivan, holding his audience with theatrical lectures on the deadly menace of communism and the real dangers of atheistic materialism. Fulton Sheen—the 71-year-old boy wonder and protege of 78-year-old Francis Cardinal Spellman, the renowned and reactionary vicar of the American military. *That* Fulton Sheen suddenly wanted to get out of Vietnam. Now.

The emerging left of the Catholic Church surfaced in this dramatic fashion during the long, trying summer of 1967. In New Jersey, a 33-year-old priest started regularly saying underground Mass in suburban living rooms like there was a war on or something, handing out sliced whole wheat bread for Holy Communion. In Milwaukee, Fr. James Groppi displayed all the righteous anger of Jesus himself over the racism of his fellow white Catholics. Across the country, nuns sporadically announced they were kicking their habits. At Notre Dame, the Oxford of Catholic higher education, hundreds of priests who had gathered for a conference on the problems of celibacy called in the national press to let it be known that they were, frankly, horny.

Was this the unprincipled, authoritarian Church I had left?

When I was a sixth-grade student at St. Cecilia's Grammar School at Vicente and 18th Avenues in San Francisco's fog-bound Sunset District, I learned for the first time that the monolithic Catholic Church is willing to make a deal. At that time, all of us young Catholics were saving up our dimes to "ransom" pagan babies by buying stamps, called pagan baby stamps, which, when purchased, assured us that any "yellow" pagan baby of our choice would be baptized. We also got to name it, with a Christian name, of course. Stamps cost five dollars for a boy and three dollars for a girl, since the nun told us that the Chinese usually drowned girls at birth because they couldn't work. No one in the class thought at the time to ask *why* the Church had accepted this discriminatory price on female life, but a wave of sympathy swept across us for all those drowning little pagan girls in the muddy waters of the Yangtze. The nun, Sister Mary Vivian, let it be known that for ten dollars we could ransom a boy and *two* girls. Everybody saved up for that because it seemed a bargain.

My sixteen years of formal Catholic schooling left me with a more serious *Weltanschauung* than merely a unit theory of economic value for pagan babies. For one thing, all through Catholic grammar school and high school I never read the Bible. We learned about what was in the Bible, instead, from books written by priests which had big colored pictures and were called Bible histories. One gained the distinct impression that reading the Bible might not be too good an idea, because it was filled with difficult, if not dangerous, passages that only the Church could properly interpret for you. In Catholic high school I learned my European history from a special Catholic textbook which might have been titled "The History of Western Civilization" but was called instead "The History of Western Christianity." I still have the book, a little dog-eared now and the cover is torn off, but if anyone would like to, they can see how St. Augustine loomed a little bigger than Caesar or how Constantine was more important than Mohammed.

This, of course, was in the pre-Pope John days. Apparently ecumenism has made a big difference in the Church's teaching now, but all I learned about Jews in school was that Christ kicked them out of the temple for money-changing (nobody, nun or priest, ever made much about Christ being a Jew, too) and that adjectives like "perfidious" were applied to them in the prayers we had to memorize.

Catholic college, a large Jesuit university, was a little worse when it should have been better. I remember going to the library to work on a term paper and asking the librarian why, since they had the New Republic, they didn't carry the Nation. He told me that "one liberal magazine is enough." A course in anti-communism was required, and one of the textbooks was J. Edgar Hoover's *Masters of Deceit*. One requirement in an upper division political science final was to draw a map, with specially provided colored pencils, of the DEW air defense line.

In the religion classes, aging and potty Jesuits, many of them ex-chaplains, spent the mornings involving us in the sin of the Albigensians and recalling how it was so hot in north Africa that you could fry eggs right there on the hood of the jeep after you finished saying Mass. Later, I discovered that the text from which I studied Thomistic ethics (another required course) had been revised immediately after 1945 in its "Just War" section to make the American use of the atomic bomb morally acceptable.

I found my experience to be typical of other disillusioned or disenfranchised Catholics I have met throughout the country who had gone through Catholic schools during the '40s or '50s, or of course the '20s and '30s, and for that matter most, if not all, of the '60s. It is therefore small wonder that there is a revolution going on in the Catholic Church in America. It is an intellectual revolution, because that is the area where the Church has so arrogantly and ignorantly repressed its subjects. Like all serious revolutions, it has developed its own theory and

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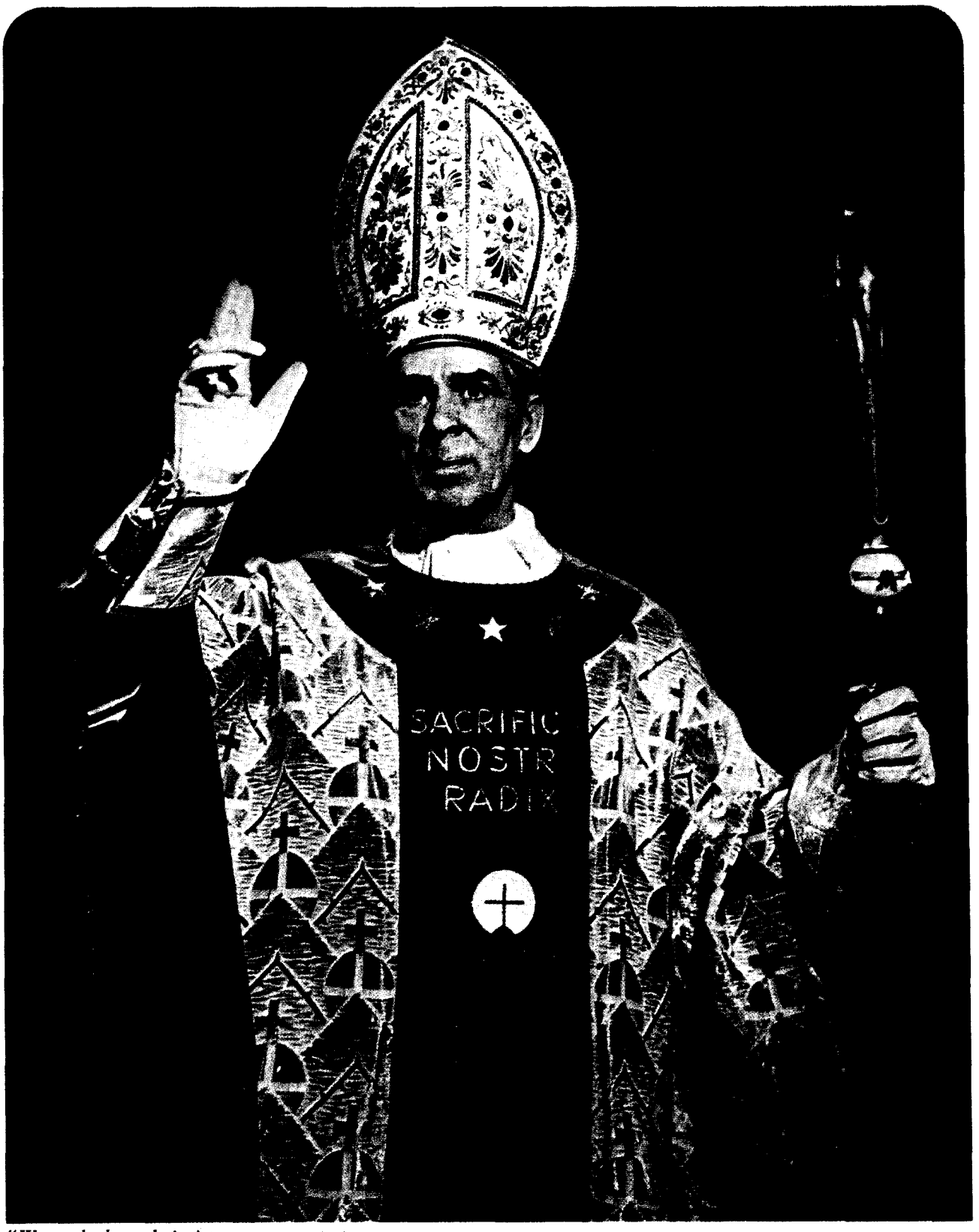

"We are both revolutionists, uneasy, upstarts, catalysts, disturbing the moods and philosophies of the world, and why—because we have a vocation from God."
—Bishop Sheen speaking to a rabbi in a Rochester synagogue

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leaders; perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the tumult that has been crashing over the rock of the Church for the last decade is that a functioning left wing has developed within American Catholicism—a left led, *mirabile dictu*, by priests.

[AN ECCLESIASTICAL POPULAR FRONT]

THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN liberals in the Church. But like most liberals, they were at best careful progressives, concerned with protecting the institution of the Church by adapting reasonably to the times rather than retrenching in the past, as their enemies, the conservatives, would have it. Even the Church's best known liberals, like John Henry Newman, were decidedly not leftists who possessed a totally different structural and theological view of what the Church should be, nor were they radicals who thought the Church so corrupt that they didn't care if they tore it down in their zealous efforts to make life better for the individuals in it.

That theoretical distinction is important to keep in mind, because there are genuine leftists and radical priests wearing Roman collars and black gabardine in the American Catholic Church today. And, as happens in revolutionary climates, they have formed a sort of ecclesiastical popular front with liberals like Sheen to forge a very broad and effective Catholic left.

Hardly since St. Joseph Labre insisted so strongly on the beatific qualities inherent in not bathing that he finally had to go pray in a cave by himself, has there been such a strong instance of singlemindedness in the Church as that shown by the reformer priests who rally under the twin cries of "renewal" and "revolution." The objects of renewal are the Church's liturgy and its social function, which the reformers feel must become personally Christian rather than ecclesiastically Catholic. The object of revolution is the authoritarian and bureaucratic structure of the Church which the reformers want to take apart, like a mile-high tinker toy, and reassemble in smaller and more responsive parts.

If you start counting from Christ as Rome does, rarely in its Nineteen Hundred and Sixty-seven years has the Church faced such a challenge from within. Fr. Groppi fighting the good fight in Milwaukee, or Fr. William DuBay publicly telling Los Angeles' Cardinal McIntyre that he is a bigot and a totalitarian monster, may seem freak events to the average non-Catholic. But to Catholics of both the right and left, the unparalleled American clerical radicalism has apocalyptic portent.

To understand why requires a momentary overview of Catholic intellectual history during recent centuries—seemingly the most convenient units for measuring time within the Church. The Church has traditionally been able to co-opt or control or eject its radicals, leaving the range of allowable dissension between liberals—who argued that the Church could oblige itself to the secular world without harm—and conservatives who urged that Catholics return to the protective womb of the Blessed Virgin. In see-saw fashion, a period of liberal victory has usually been followed by a time of conservative retrenchment, eventually culminating in the slight progressive thrust of the glacial ice mass. Catholic liberals managed to accommodate the rationalism of the Enlightenment to the demands of their orthodoxy, but the "modernism" of the 19th century proved too much for Rome to take. The resulting intellectual wreckage is still being cleared away. The Papacy became increasingly authoritarian, as under Pope Pius IX who issued a "Syllabus of Errors" which gave hellfire to "progress, liberalism and modern civilization." He also intensified devotionalism, in 1854 making a dogma of faith out of what had previously been a highly suspect biological idiosyncrasy in the New Testament, by proclaiming, with great fanfare, the Immaculate Conception.

If in Europe the conservatives showed the Church at its most reactionary, the liberals in America showed it at its most pragmatic. In the late 19th century, a distinct liberal Catholicism began to emerge in America; led, however, by eminently practical men like Archbishop James Gibbons of Baltimore and John Ireland of St. Paul, its goals were more apologetical than reformist. Fearful that sly Protestant insinuations that Catholics would obey Rome before Washington would curtail the Church's growing acceptance and affluence, they recognized the need to somehow square the authoritarian tradition of the Church with the country's democratic principles. The "Americanization" of the immigrant Church was accomplished, finally, in very neat fashion by adopting the posture that the goals of the Catholic Church and the American people were similar if not identical.

The price of this profitable consensus for the Church was a diligent pro-Americanism that demanded, and received, almost uncritical acceptance of American society. This eager accommodation between Church and country became the distinguishing characteristic of liberal American Catholicism and is as indicative of Southern Catholic bishops allowing the maintenance of black and white communion rails as of Cardinal Spellman telling Americans fighting in Vietnam that they are "soldiers of Christ."

The almost quisling theological posture that the 19th century immigrant Church adopted has changed but little. Voices on the Catholic right, like the infamous Father Coughlin, the anti-Semitic "radio priest" of the 1930's, might occasionally rise to offer the cloak of Christ in the name of fascism, but as for a Catholic left, or even a Catholic social conscience, the Church remained true to the example of Archbishop Gibbons who once said that if "social convulsions" forced him to abandon his regular posture of "masterly inactivity," he would say "to the troubled waters, 'Peace, be still,' " rather than join in the convulsion.

Even after the denigrating spectacle of the German Catholic bishops remaining silent over the pursuits of the Nazis in the name of "prudence," it was only the rare member of what was called the Catholic "lunatic fringe" who would dare demand that America examine its national conscience. In an atmosphere of ecclesiastical yahooism, priests who wished to think beyond their brevaries were forced to become intellectual politicians who spent as much time justifying their intellectual pursuits to their superiors as in pursuing them. And even the rare manifestations of Catholic activism, like the anarchist Catholic Worker movement, directed its attacks against the government but never dared to criticize the Church for failing to bear its Christian witness. The venerable agrarian socialist Dorothy Day, for all her desire to melt down Cardinal Spellman's gold rings, still took occasional tea with His Eminence, and, while she had no hesitation about blocking New York City streets during air raid drills, she became very up-tight if anyone said as much as boo about a priest.

But all this has changed, radically, unexpectedly and spectacularly since Pope John XXIII opened the Church to renewal.

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John could not have anticipated some of the results—like the frank anti-clericalism that is developing in American Catholicism. Laymen are cussing out priests, and priests are cussing out bishops. The old obeisance is gone, and "respect for the cloth" is being replaced by respect—or disgust—for the man wearing it. A young priest in revolt, Fr. George J. Hafner of Jamesburg, New Jersey, who has ignored his bishops' orders to stop saying underground Masses, expressed the spirit of many priests in the Catholic left when he said that he could care less about what the bishop thought. "Remaining respectable will be the death of the renewal movement. We are going to have to risk respectability, risk a lot of things as Christ did," he said. Once the Church loses the respect of its priests, everything is up for grabs.

[PRIESTS AT WAR—I]
Enter Father Groppi, Swinging

THE BLESSED MOTHER'S head and arms were black, but one foot, right where she was standing on top of the snake which represented Satan, was still white. So was the snake. That was because the young Negro girl who had been painting the statue of the Blessed Mother in front of the devotional candles in St. Bonifice Church had gone off in a hurry to get arrested with the assistant pastor.

St. Boniface, a stained Gothic church in Milwaukee's north side, was once a German national parish. But as the racial complexion of the city changed, so did the faithful of St. Boniface, which is now some 90 per cent Negro. The assistant pastor, Fr. James Groppi, is white. The pastor, Fr. Eugene F. Bleidorn, who is also white, says his assistant is "a Negro with white skin." That is not far from the view that Fr. Groppi has of himself. "In this struggle, I believe there are white men who are black and there are black, middle-class men who are white. I think I'm black," he said. Certainly, white or black, he is something of a secular saint to the Negroes in his parish and to the militant members of the Milwaukee Youth Council of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, of which he is advisor, spiritual leader, chief strategist, sex counselor and breadwinner.

Members of the Youth Council wear sweatshirts which have "Milwaukee NAACP" on the front and slogans like "Soul Sister" or "Remember McKissick" on the back. It was the council members, with Fr. Groppi in the lead, who disturbed the peace and segregated domestic tranquillity of Milwaukee for a solid month of days this summer, agitating for an open-housing ordinance which the Milwaukee City Council, at last count, had rejected four times. Or maybe it was five.

Fr. Groppi is smallish, perhaps five-foot-seven, chain smokes, wears baggy black suits and sunglasses even at night, and has been arrested six times during his three very active years of civil rights activism. Two of the arrests were during 1965 demonstrations against de facto segregation in Milwaukee public schools. For those who still may not be clear about what de facto segregation is, Fr. Groppi has a succinct explanation: "We had bussing alright, but they picked up entire Negro classes and bussed them intact to white schools. There, they had their own recesses, their own classrooms. They were bussed back into the ghetto to eat lunch. We blocked the buses."

Milwaukee's mayor, trying to turn the tables, has charged the priest with using "Ku Klux Klan tactics." Wisconsin's governor, who had to call out the National Guard last year to hold off a pending race riot when Fr. Groppi and his black group picketed the suburban home of a circuit court judge to protest his membership in the white-only Fraternal Order of Eagles, has accused Fr. Groppi of being on a misguided mission. But Milwaukee Archbishop William E. Cousins, no doubt uncomfortable under the pressure from outraged white Catholics who are demanding that he curtail Fr. Groppi's activism, has refused so far to interfere, saying simply, "Fr. Groppi has a lot of guts."

No priest could have been happier than James Groppi when Archbishop Cousins assigned him to St. Boniface Church four years ago. Fr. Groppi had been serving in white parishes and the change, for him, was a distinct relief. Fr. James Koneakzny, a seminary pal of "Grup," as he is called by his priestly intimates, who has marched with his former classmate on many of the Youth Council's trips downtown, recalled that Fr. Groppi's overriding concern with racism began in their school days. "When we were in Theology I, he got involved with a day camp for Negroes. He spent all his summers working there. He worked with the kids all day, the parents all night. For him, it was a day and night camp."

Fr. Groppi has said that working with Negroes that summer gave him the terrible realization of what it was like to be black and poor in a white world. "I saw the social suffering and ostracism," he said. "I suffered with them and I have never stopped suffering." Constantly trying to counteract what he terms the white society's "brainwashing" against blacks, Fr. Groppi has worked, like a Muslim, to have his Negro charges see black as a beautiful color. That is why, at St. Boniface, he gave the children black and brown paint and told them to change those lily-white plaster saints and Christs around the church into something they could identify with. The other day, crossing the dirty street near the St. Boniface rectory, he stopped to yell to a little Negro girl: "Hey, who made you so beautiful?"

Surveying the ghetto around his church, Fr. Groppi likes to point out that he grew up in the second poorest parish in Milwaukee. His father was an immigrant Italian whose mother couldn't read English. This ethnic background made him very sensitive to racist slurs like "nigger" or "polack": his father knew what it was like to be a minority Italian on Milwaukee's south side during the Depression.

Fr. Groppi helps support the Youth Council by giving it his honorariums, sometimes as much as $100, from speaking engagements. Otherwise, he shares the poverty and the problems of the Negro teenagers. Often, he lives with them in a "freedom house" they have managed to rent, usually one step ahead of condemnation proceedings. "I see a kind of Christianity there that is unbelievable. One of the guys has a pack of cigarettes and he walks in this freedom house. It's everybody's pack. A guy has two bits. It's everybody's two bits . . ."

The Youth Council members are tough guys. Many have been in jail for armed robbery or rape. Though most aren't Catholics, Fr. Groppi feels he is exerting a positive moral influence. "I don't get up and give lectures. As far as their association with women is concerned, we talk about this all the time. They're not afraid to use terms like 'shacking up' in my presence. The only way you can preach morals to guys like this is to live like they are living."

Facing increased white violence against open housing demonstrations, Fr. Groppi organized a kind of black Special

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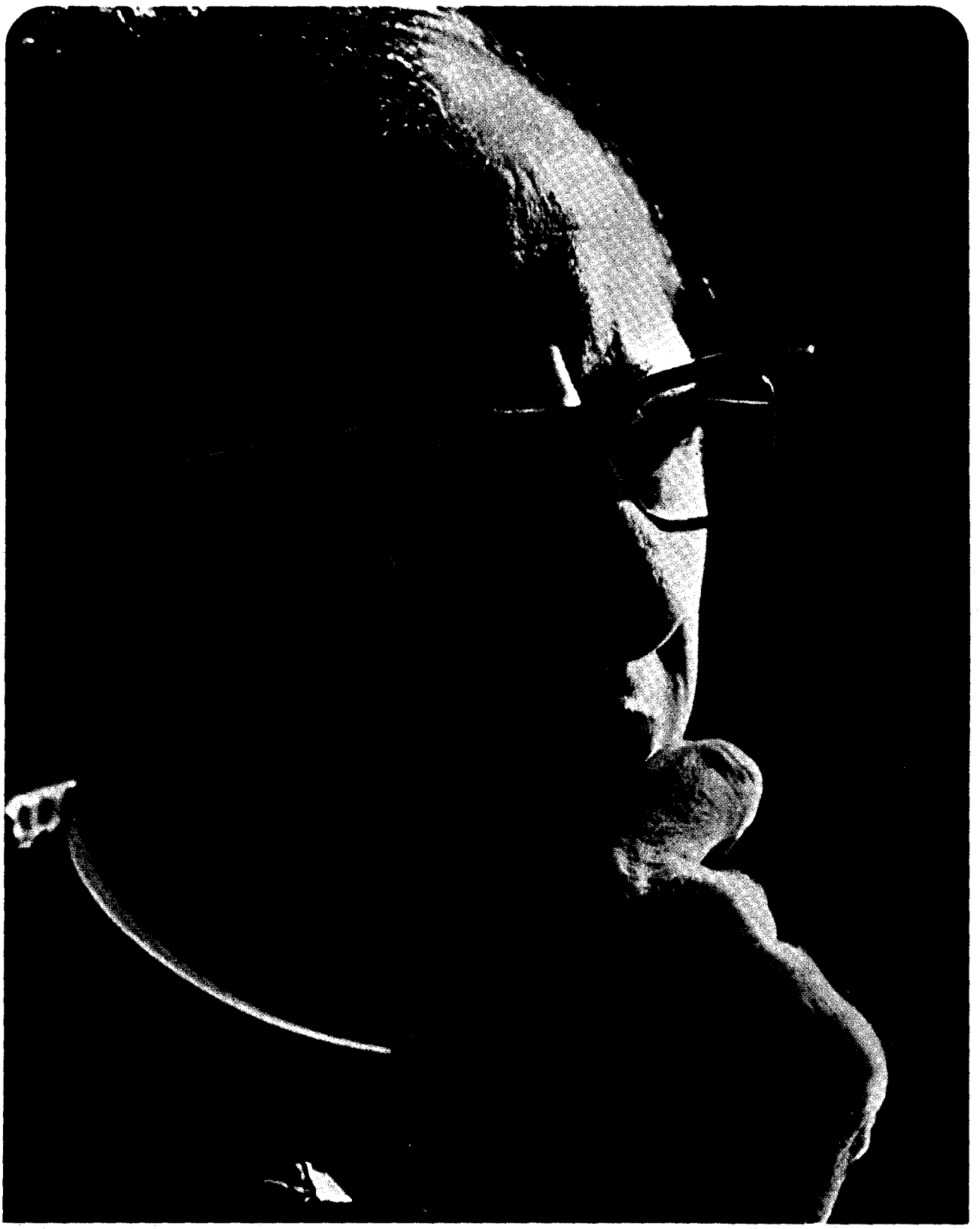

"*Jesus Christ was a civil rights worker.*
The greatest civil rights worker, greater than anyone here.
No one here has ever been nailed to a cross."
—Rev. James Groppi, addressing the Youth Council of the Milwaukee NAACP.

Photograph by Ted Rozumalski—Black Star

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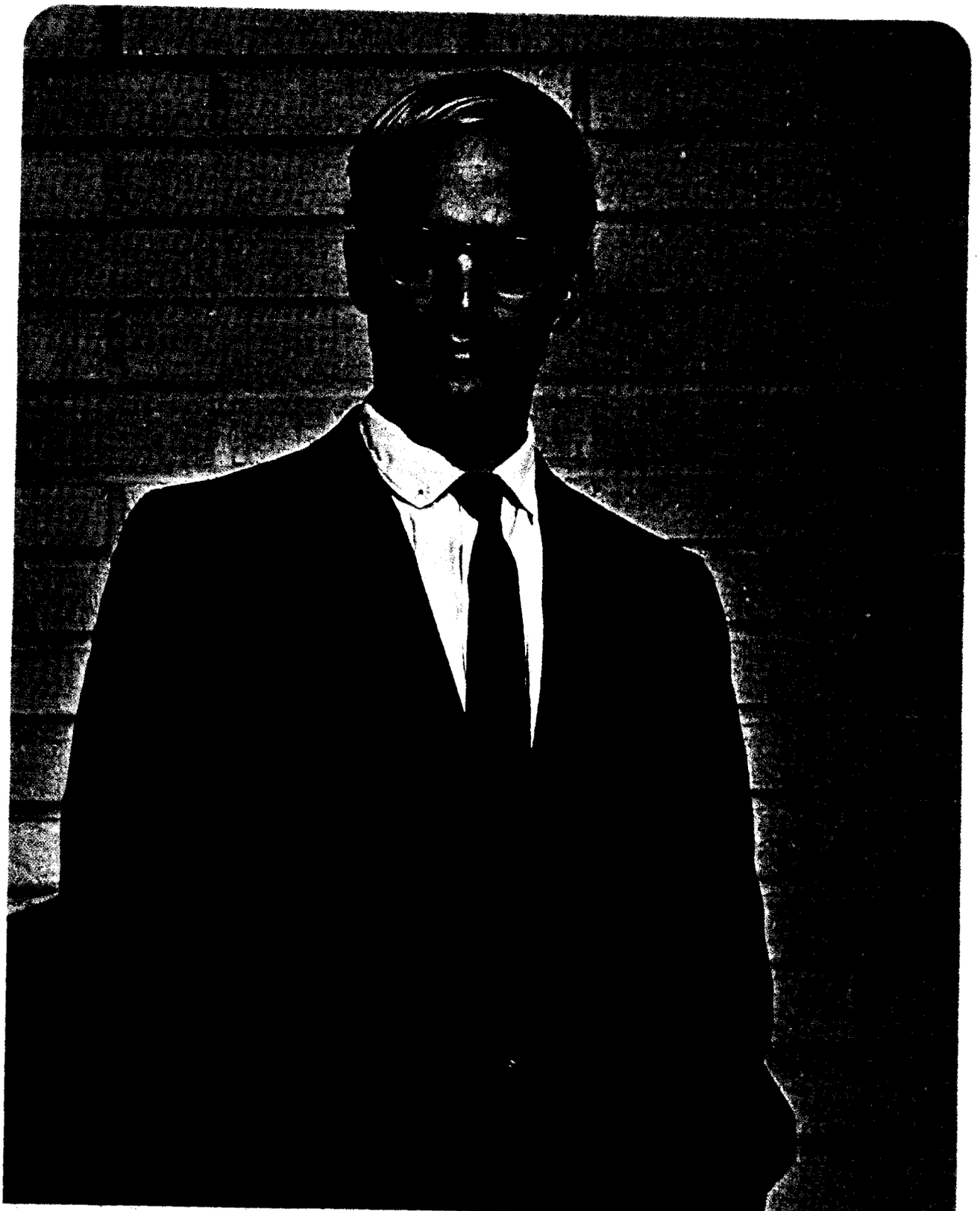

"*Among its most cherished privileges*
is the exemption of the Church
from property taxes."
—Rev. William DuBay, presently suspended from priestly functions, including the wearing of the Roman collar.

Photograph by Peter James Samerjan

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Forces within the Youth Council. Their sweatshirts have the initial "C" on the back for "Commandos." Their job is to avoid profanity during demonstrations, be available at any time of day or night, and be ready to protect the black marchers from white violence by whatever means are necessary. Two Commandos constantly guard Fr. Groppi during public excursions. They say they would die for him.

As a civil rights leader, Fr. Groppi accepts Martin Luther King's philosophy of nonviolence as a tactic. As a priest, he rejects it as an absolute moral principle. "I don't know that a nonviolent revolution is, in fact, realistic in the United States. But then it has never been tried except for isolated situations. We are either successful here in Milwaukee or it goes over to violence. The black man is understandably ready. Rap Brown was right when he said violence was as American as cherry pie. We've all thrilled in American history classes to the spectacle of an oppressed people rising up against their oppressors with violence. I believe, with Malcolm X, in the absolute necessity of self-defense. I believe in what you might call 'the right to brick.' "

But Fr. Groppi also rejects the sanctity of black separatism. The Youth Council is black, but not black nationalist. "I don't accept the kind of Black Power that excludes white people completely from the movement. Here whites have been totally committed. They've been tear gassed, jailed and beaten with us. [Groppi often uses "us" and "we" in speaking to and about Negroes.] The black people have a right to determine the tactics, but here we welcome whites—following Malcolm's notion that white in complexion is alright, but not in attitude. I think frankly that it is more radical at this point in the movement to have blacks and whites working together."

[AN ESCHATOLOGICAL INTERLUDE]

ST. BONIFACE IS ALWAYS BUSY, for, like Brown's Chapel in Selma, it is a headquarters. In the large brick basement, an emergency room is staffed by volunteer doctors and nurses for the treatment of any marchers whom the Commandos were not able to protect. Some 200 protesters, many of them teenagers, have been patched up there. Volunteers also staff a housing office for the marchers, many of them priests, who come to Milwaukee from distant dioceses to join in Fr. Groppi's protest; many visitors are put up in St. Boniface's rectory. The parish kitchen served over 1000 meals to marchers during the Labor Day weekend, when Dick Gregory stood on the Church steps and, shouting over the deep bass rhythm of a congo drummer who was keeping time to the swaying, swinging crowd's chorus of "Sock it to me, Black Power—ou, ah, ay," told everyone who could manage to hear that "Fr. Groppi has given the Pope respect in our black ghetto for the first time in history."

Fr. Groppi, even on "Face The Nation," wouldn't comment on this, but he is not that happy with the Pope. He is angry, very angry, about his Church's almost incredible reluctance to do anything serious about racism in America. Recalling the constant "nigger jokes" he heard in the seminary, Fr. Groppi said that in addition to those strong influences from the cultural swamp of Irish Catholic provincialism, most priests are not involved in civil rights because of the "erroneous training they received as Catholics. We have identified sanctity with the magical reception of the sacraments. Noninvolvement has actually been preached to us."

The blame for this situation, Fr. Groppi stresses, can be put on the "eschatological emphasis" in Catholic training. Eschatology, if you don't care to look it up in the nearest Catholic encyclopedia, is the branch of theology concerned with life after death—resurrection, immortality, that sort of thing. And it has become something of the dirty word it sounds like. If you recall the fire-and-brimstone sermon that sends Stephen Daedalus reeling from the chapel in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*—that was eschatological. The Church has traditionally stressed the rewards and alternative horrors of the afterlife with emphasis on making it through this vale of tears by refraining from committing any mortal sins, and by confessing them immediately when you do. Otherwise, keep your nose clean, and always, at least, make your Easter Duty. The Church is in favor of Good Works, but has never pushed them too much, the Protestants being presumed to have cornered that piece of the action. The result of this "eschatological emphasis" has been to turn Catholics and generations of their priests notoriously inward to the pious and petty legalistic interior world of the Church and away from society—away, also, from the Church's own social teachings.

"Life after death is important, sure," Fr. Groppi said, "but not when it means you don't worry when your brother has nothing to eat. Priests are cowards. We like to cool it. We call this prudence. It's not, it's cowardliness because that man is preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ which, to me, is as radical a doctrine as you'll find anywhere. The Church ought to be the number one civil rights organization in America with a leader like Jesus.

"Anyway, the whole problem of racism boils down to this: if the Church was really doing its job, the phenomenon of racism would have disappeared a long time ago." This may sound like a big order, even for the Catholic Church, but then you have to realize that for decades the Church's Legion of Decency—with its movie ratings of clean, just-a-little-dirty, and real dirty—seriously affected the box office economics of the movie industry. Those recommendations weren't even, as Catholics say, "binding in sin," but the Church's ample teaching on racial discrimination, by any liberal interpretation, makes racism, de facto or extemporaneous, a mortal sin. However, while never hesitating to stress its teaching on, say, birth control, the Church's racial doctrines are rarely taught (Cardinal McIntyre had a specific rule against preaching sermons on race), and even more rarely enforced.

Trying to understand Fr. Groppi's righteous anger at his Church, one comes to the painful observation that the American Church has been something of a bastard, really, about Negroes. Catholic historian William Osborne, in *The Segregated Covenant*, his recent study of the standing effects of Catholic racism, notes that while the 19th century Church took no explicit position on segregation and generally adopted a patronizing attitude toward Negroes, things haven't improved much 100 years later. It took *four* full *years* after the 1954 Supreme Court decision for the National Catholic Welfare Conference (the official organization of the United States bishops) to "make an unambiguous pronouncement on the moral nature of segregation and discrimination." The Church still maintains a "Commission for Catholic Missions Among the Colored and the Indians," which issued an annual report as late as 1966.

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Though the Church has excommunicated priests like Fr. Leonard Feeney for being too stubbornly zealous in their teaching of unfavored doctrine, it has yet to discipline, even mildly, the most fanatically bigoted of its priests. If you like horror stories for examples, look at Chicago. During Martin Luther King's marches into southwest side communities in the summer of 1966, monsignors openly blessed the scapular medals of young Catholic hoods who were going out to throw bricks at the interlopers. One Chicago pastor testified in court on behalf of some of his parochial school children who had ignited a Molotov cocktail on the porch of a black family.

Such excesses, apparently, may no longer be excused in the name of "prudence" as priests of the left like Fr. Groppi take the implementation of the Church's racial doctrine out of the silly putty hands of the bishops and apply it in the streets.

[PRIESTS AT WAR—II]
Rev. William DuBay, AFL-CIO

"I DON'T SEE ANYTHING the trade union movement could do for priests," George Meany said, hoping, no doubt, that he had closed the subject. It was about the first business he had turned down in years, although the fact that he is a Catholic may have had a lot to do with Meany's rejection of DuBay's new American Federation of Priests for membership in the AFL-CIO. One can sympathize with Meany's reluctance, since one of the contract provisions of the American Federation of Priests (AFP) that the AFL-CIO would be called upon to obtain through picket lines and secondary boycotts is the right of the Catholic priest to marry.

But DuBay will soon be back to the AFL-CIO, as hopeful of admission as he is certain of eventual victory in his ecclesiastical lawsuit against his cardinal, James Francis McIntyre of Los Angeles, for malfeasance in office, abuse of ecclesiastical authority and racism.

DuBay wears casual clothes these days because last fall the elderly, right wing cardinal, still very much in possession of the Church powers DuBay wishes to have removed ("If I don't win in Rome, I'll sue him in civil court in Los Angeles"), suspended the 31-year-old cleric from all priestly functions.

DuBay worked for a while counseling addicts at Synanon's Santa Monica headquarters, then got a part-time job with the Poverty Program to help support himself when he launched the AFP (active membership: 250 and growing; dues: $25 annually, but only $2.50 for seminarians with a student body card). The goals of the union, which eventually hopes to organize two-thirds of the 60,000 Catholic priests in the U.S., are substantial: collective bargaining with bishops and chancery officials for contracts that would give priests "professional" wages; transfer and grievance procedures; the choice of individual residences and the right to select individual ministries—such as being a hospital chaplain, or working with the poor—and, last but not least, the option to marry.

So militant has DuBay been in pressing for what he calls the "institutionalized martyrdom" of parish priests, that he has been termed by some laymen sympathetic to him the "Black Power" advocate of the priesthood. If so, it is a call with which more and more priests—hundreds last year, this year literally thousands—are sympathizing.

The radicalism of American priests has increased in almost direct proportion to the length of time that curial discussion of the reforms—both hinted at and promised at Vatican II—has drifted on. At the Catholic "Free Speech Movements" at St. John's University in New York in 1966 and Catholic University in Washington in 1967, the malcontents originally challenging the school administrations were the faculty priests, not the students. In both cases, the students joined in only later. The institutional bureaucracy of the Church has, almost by natural selection, consumed the legislation of the Ecumenical Council in a labyrinth of post-consular synods, commissions, assemblies and committee and consultative bodies, rivaled only by the human digestive tract in circumlocution of direction. With nothing happening in Rome, the priests, like angry citizens in a small town, are taking matters into their own hands.

Many priests, like poet Daniel Berrigan, or liturgical reformer George Hafner, simply wished away their ecclesiastical superiors, not even bothering to open the chancery office letters that come special delivery, and are going about their business as they see fit—teaching, preaching or agitating. Others followed the example of the Rev. Edward J. Yunker, aged 54, of St. Peter, Minnesota, who eloped with Betty Currian, the parish secretary and housekeeper of long standing and went off to Florida where he planned to join up with two other married fathers to work towards "helping" those priests who chose, or will choose, the clerical state of marriage.

Despite the popularity of the celibacy issue (a recent survey of rank-and-file priests by Joseph Fichter, a Jesuit sociologist who occupies what amounts to the Roman Catholic chair at Harvard, showed that 62 per cent of them wanted the freedom to marry), the dominant concern of priests in the expanding Catholic left is not sex but the general nature of the Church's absolutist authority—over sex, education, politics, all individual initiative. Most radical priests regard the view that celibacy regulations are responsible for current shortages of Catholic priests as popular fiction (there is a shortage of Protestant ministers, too); they feel instead that the decline in priestly vocations is but one indication of a general decline in the relevance of religious institutions, the Catholic Church leading the way down. The word "irrelevant" is the battle cry of the young turk priests, for whom Fr. DuBay is a spokesman. They feel that the Church must "share the burden of revolutions within the society" instead of helping to delay them. Perhaps the extreme expression of this view was represented by Fr. Camilo Torres, Colombia's guerrilla priest (RAMPARTS, April 1966), who said that "every Catholic who is not a revolutionary, and is not on the side of the revolutionaries, lives in mortal sin." Another ecclesiastical opinion, possibly more radical still, caused a good deal of talk over evening rectory cocktails recently. Msgr. Ivan Illich, director of the obscure Center for Intercultural Formation in Cuernavaca, Mexico, was given five consecutive double page spreads in the respected Catholic literary publication The Critic to argue that the entire clergy as we know it is a "vanishing" profession; that the defection of increasing numbers of men from the priesthood should be received "in a spirit of deep joy" because it is a manifestation of the disappearance of "institutional bureaucracy" within the Church; that priests would be more effective ministers if they worked at secular jobs; and that lay priests and lay theologians will form the backbone of the "pastoral" Church of the future.

In the hurly-burly of the radical polarization of Catholic thought, Fr. DuBay falls into the ranks of the traditionalists, if not the conservatives, compared to Msgr. Illich. He believes

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in staying. He believes the structure of the Church, with essential remodeling, is necessary for the future, and his faith is such that he thinks the Church has a "tremendous capacity" to survive the very revolutionary war he is waging.

[THE NUNS' TALES]

THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 180,000 nuns in the United States. Last year, some 3600 of them, by the count of no less an authority than the Ladies Home Journal, went over the wall. That is a rapid rate of decline, and if it keeps up, there will hardly be any nuns left in less than a century. In the opinion of many of the good sisters, that will not be soon enough.

In the pre-Pope John Church, the nuns were the vanguard, far outpacing the priests, of what was then the daring-do of liberal practices. (Los Angeles' Immaculate Heart nuns have for years run an avant garde art program right under Cardinal McIntyre's scepter with the keenness of a moonshiner hiding a still.) But the more progressive the orders of nuns became, the more they wanted to do apostolic work in integration, women's rights, reshaping Catholic education, and helping the slum poor and the rural poor—and the more frustrated they found themselves. The prejudicial strictures of the Church against clerical activism and the arbitrary restrictions of cloister life seemed, to many, to demand that a woman put her mind, as well as her body, on the convent shelf for life.

Few Church leaders sensed this. One of them who did, Belgium's progressive Cardinal Suenens, published a book in 1962 which called for nuns to get out of the "anachronism" of the "convent fortress" and do some good in the world. If the sisters were waiting for the "Go" sign from the Vatican Council, it never came. Even after Pope John "opened the door," the branch of the Vatican bureaucracy called the Sacred Congregation of Religious decreed that the "sweeping reforms" which the nuns had been expecting in their rules would consist, at the wildest, of permission for sisters to wear wristwatches as long as they were hidden under their sleeves. For those nuns who were so impatient with the world that they wanted to go block troop trains, that was bad timing.

To the surprise of the functionaries in Rome, many nuns began acting just like women. They walked out of the convents. Some, like the Glenmary Sisters, took the convent with them, for all practical purposes. Fifty members of that midwestern social service order, headed by their Mother Superior of 14 years, along with the Assistant Mother Superior and four other assistants, announced that they were leaving the order to continue their work among the Appalachian poor, not as religious—but as laywomen. The mass exodus, which left about 15 nuns in the entire order, was prompted by their local hierarchical superior, 81-year-old Archbishop Karl Alter of Cincinnati, who decreed that the working nuns, who spent most of their time, day and night, visiting poverty-stricken families, must be in their convent beds by ten p.m.

This sort of ecclesiastical stupidity is not uncommon in dealing with nuns. Catholic writer Robert Blair Kaiser, in a Ladies Home Journal survey on the mass exodus from the convents, reported that doctors had discovered "particularly widespread" menstrual and menopausal problems among nuns, traceable to the overstressed "denial of sexuality" in convent life, apparently to the extent of flattening their breasts and ignoring gynecological complications in the name of modesty.

The common denominator among defecting nuns is the conviction that they are unable to remain in the Church or to continue to follow their Christian consciences unless they leave the convent. This is true even of the most liberal orders where it is not necessary to drink martinis out of coffee cups, orders like the Sisters of Loretto, from which Sister Jacqueline Grennan, the president of St. Louis' famed Webster College, defected all over the front pages last January.

If the Church had not held on too tightly, it would not have had nuns breaking loose this way. The Church seems to learn these things slowly, but it does learn. One object lesson can be found in Rochester, New York, where Bishop Fulton J. Sheen is riding the wild horse of renewal, high in the saddle. Giddyap.

[THE CHURCHMAN AS RECONCILER]

Sheen of Rochester

LIKE AN OLD CATERPILLAR, Fulton J. Sheen has metamorphosed, at age 71, from a fundamentalist anti-communist and modernist-baiter to the social butterfly of the Renewal Movement. The switch was as dramatic as it was unexpected. Assuming pastoral duties as bishop of Rochester last fall, he proceeded to do everything in superlatives. He spoke to almost every anxiety of the Catholic left. For priests concerned with a voice in Church decision making, he allowed the 583 clerics in his diocese to pick his second-in-command from among their ranks; for laymen concerned with the business administration of the Church, he appointed a lay committee to handle the financial affairs of the diocese; for Catholics concerned with the Church's attitude toward minorities, he appointed Fr. David Finks, a thorough-going radical priest who has been helping Saul Alinsky organize the Rochester slums, to the newly-created post of "Vicar of The Poor"; for those concerned over the Church's silence on Vietnam, he urged President Johnson to "immediately" withdraw U.S. forces.

Suddenly, Sheen was not only *in* the Catholic left, he was *leading* it. He was Paul, and Rochester was Damascus. It was a conversion. A miracle. Or was it?

There is one incident which at once sums up all the good things and all the bad things that there are to say about Fulton Sheen's new role as liberal innovator. When the trend in liturgical renewal moved towards Masses said in individual homes, Sheen adopted the idea so enthusiastically that he wanted to say such a home Mass himself, to show how it should be done. For reasons best known to him, he decided to say his Mass in the home of a poor Negro and sent an aide out to line one up. In Rochester, that was not difficult. The bishop arrived at the house with several aides and several suitcases. In the kitchen, he put on his vestments—his full ceremonial robes, including tall hat and white gloves. And, finally, there, in the modest living room of the ghetto home, the resplendent bishop said his historic Mass. When he left, the Negro housewife summed up her feelings: "I never felt so rich or so poor."

Sheen, the busy shepherd, constantly makes personal appearances throughout his diocese, visiting the poor and the sick. Usually, the clash of values apparent in his black Mass is not evident. A priest close to him says that Sheen's "instincts" towards the poor are good. The bishop's constant concern with the poor stems from his 16 years as a professional alms-raiser (he collected $100 million in alms from United States Catholics) as director of the Society for the Propagation of

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the Faith, which is the rather self-serving name the Catholic Church gives to its mission arm. When he got to Rochester, former alms-raiser Sheen suggested that the American Catholic Church give five per cent of its revenues to the world's poor, outright,* a grand-sounding but essentially fiscally conservative suggestion which underscores Sheen's basic orthodoxy.

One Rochester priest described Sheen's progressivism as "an exercise in selective orthodoxy." He is determined to lead the forces of renewal publicly—but also determined, privately, to see that they stay within reasonable bounds. For instance, there has been anything but a rash of home Masses since Sheen made his well-publicized visit to the ghetto home, and the bishop has been less than enthusiastic about the attempts of a Rochester lay group to organize their own boundaryless "floating parish" outside of the chancery control.

Sheen's new assignment is still another role, no doubt the toughest, in his long theatrical career. (The day of his installation as bishop, he was seen in church early, before his friend Claire Booth Luce got there, even before Cardinal Spellman arrived, personally adjusting the spotlights on the altar.) He wants to be a good bishop, and today that means both being "with it," in terms of renewal, and "on top of it," in Rome's view. To manage both, he has been forced to form an alliance with the priests of the Catholic left. If only a pragmatic alliance, it is no less effective. Fr. Finks, the radical priest, sees Sheen playing another, particularly modern, role: the "churchman as reconciler," who allows sufficient changes to make it possible for reformers to continue their work within the Church, rather than nailing theses on the doors outside.

The role of den mother and advocate of Catholic leftism is unusual enough for Fulton Sheen, but leaps of faith have been made before and the Church is known for its miracles.

[PRIESTS AT WAR—III]
Three Horsemen of The Black Pope

AN ORIGINAL SKETCH by John-John Kennedy hangs on one wall, an early Crayola drawing by Caroline Kennedy on another. Scotch-taped to the side of a filing cabinet are several letters from Jacqueline Kennedy, written after the assassination. Pictures of the Kennedy family are hung about the other walls, offsetting posters urging the U.S. to get out of Vietnam. These are the memorabilia of power, but the Rev. Richard McSorley, S.J., is not living in the past. He had just returned to Washington from Milwaukee where he marched with Fr. Groppi, and was preparing a lecture for this fall's crop of Georgetown University freshmen which would let them know, in no uncertain terms, that it is the duty of every Catholic to "become involved with the issues."

Fr. McSorley, who teaches Social Justice, is typical of the new breed of American Jesuit. He may be the prototype. A close personal friend of the Kennedys, he has remained, nonetheless, a radical. He is now known in Washington as the "Vietnam priest" because he is active in what are called "beg-ins," held on Sunday mornings on the steps of the capital's Catholic churches. The Jesuit and the beg-in group pass out to the faithful leaflets describing the devastation American power has wreaked on the Vietnamese, and then pass the hat for contributions which they openly state will be sent to aid the war victims in North Vietnam. In four months of begging, they have collected $800, but Fr. McSorley says money is not the object. "We want to confront the Catholic conscience."

Fr. McSorley's two-room apartment on the third floor of a Georgetown residence hall serves, sardine fashion, as both home and office. His shower is lined with bookshelves and the bed is in the bathroom, so that the other room, the one with all the pictures, can be used as an office from which he stays in frequent touch, via black speaker-phone, with other priest-radicals like Dan Berrigan and DuBay. He dresses casually, in black basket-woven sandals, black and blue striped socks, Jesuit-issue black pants, and a short-sleeved white shirt open at the neck. "The celibacy, abortion and birth control issues are outdated—as outdated as the idea that the Church is infallible," the Jesuit said, asserting that the serious concerns of religion are now existential.

McSorley's call to confront the conscience of Catholicism is being carried out these days by a surprisingly large number of American Jesuits. It is surprising, because the traditional stance of the Jesuits has been to defend, not attack, the Church: historically, Jesuits in America have led the charge of the dark brigade against progressivism. But now there is a new "Black Pope," as the Superior General of the Jesuits is called, and the powerful Jesuits, like so many other factions in the American Church, seem to be developing horsemen to the left.

Distinctly to the left is Fr. Daniel Berrigan, S.J., who calls himself a "Beatnik" poet, and currently works for the ecumenical United Religious Group at Cornell University and the anti-Vietnam war movement, simultaneously. Fr. Berrigan, a trim little man who wears a Mao button on his wine-colored sweater, says he no longer holds much optimism for "the institution" of the Church but is heartened that so many Catholics, especially priests and nuns, are already moving outside of the Church. "At least when the Church collapses they won't be trapped in the rubble." One of Fr. Berrigan's outside activities is the Emmaus House in New York, a center of religious and peace studies whose Catholic members wrote the contemporary ejaculation to Jesus quoted under His picture (an ejaculation is any three-line prayer to the Lord, usually asking something). Dan Berrigan comes from a religious family—his younger brother, Phillip, is a Josephite priest working in a black parish in Baltimore. Both Berrigans hold little enthusiasm for the Church as organized. "God's not dead," Dan Berrigan said, by way of explanation, "theologians are."

One theologian who isn't teaches at the Jesuit University of San Francisco. Fr. Eugene Schallart, S.J., another of the Black Pope's strong horsemen in the Catholic left, is a sociologist of religion, a calling which has not led him to be noticeably optimistic. "Priests are saying Mass in empty churches," he said. "Although pastors and bishops notoriously won't admit this, some 70 per cent of American Catholics

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*Sheen did not specify whether he meant five per cent of the Church's annual expenditures or five per cent of the earnings from its giant portfolio of investments. Apparently there is a difference. Fortune magazine reported that ten years ago the annual expenditures by Catholic churches in the United States came to $420 million, which should make it at least $600 million today. But a recent Harper's article points out that the Church's tax-free assets amount to a whopping $44.5 billion. Some alms.

This is something orthodox priests like Sheen don't talk about in public. But Fr. DuBay, for instance, has urged an end to the tax exemptions the Church enjoys. Describing the free ride as contrary to the Church's own teaching on "the responsible use of property," DuBay argues that enormous federal benefits would be available to the poor in increased tax dollars if the Church would just pay up like everybody else.

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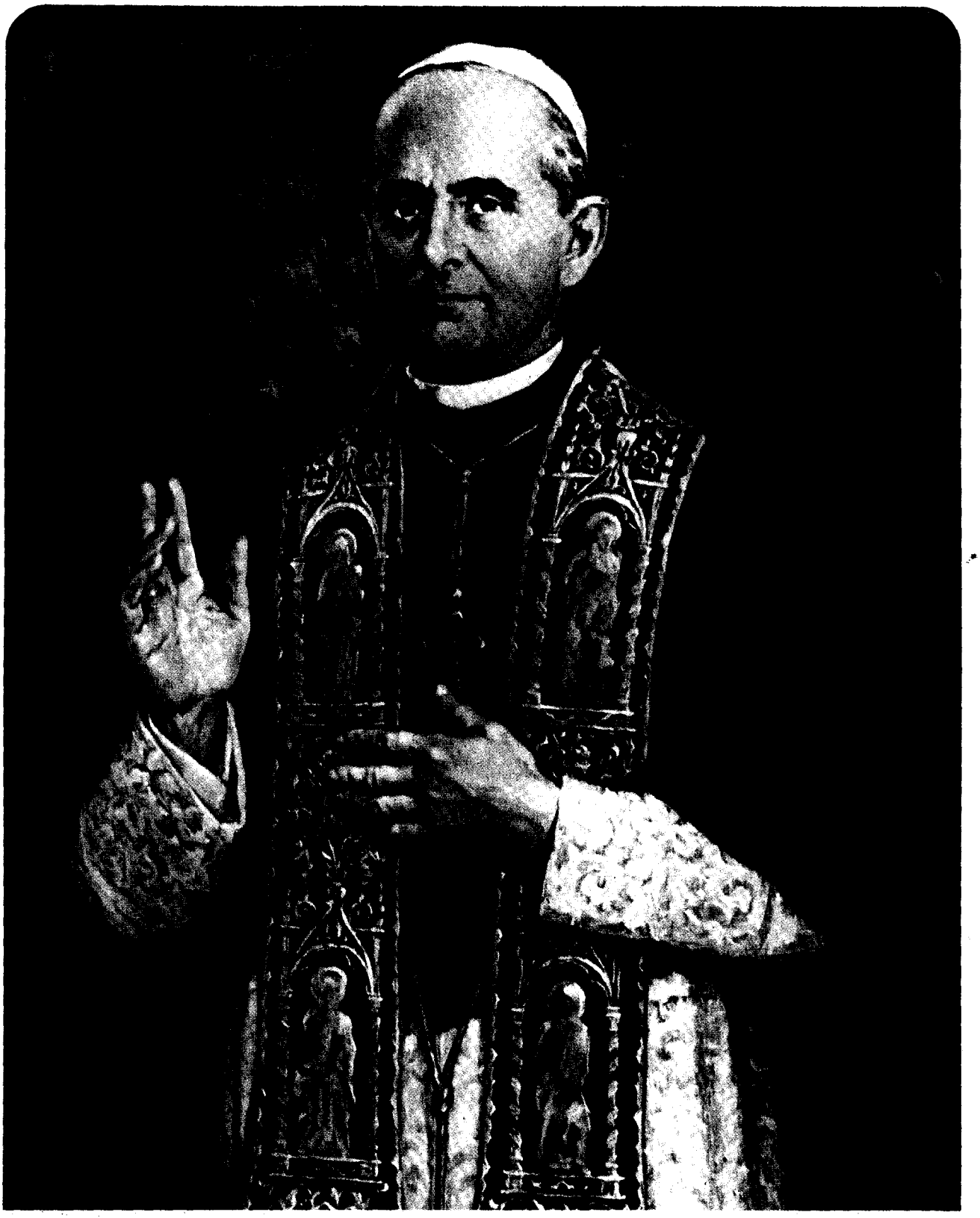

". . . It is unfortunate that . . . a system has been constructed which considers profit as the key motive for economic progress, competition as the supreme law of economics and private ownership of the means of production as an absolute right that has no limits and carries no corresponding social obligation."

—Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio.*

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don't go to Mass." The reason, Schallart believes, has to do with that favorite word of the Church's new left: relevance. He thinks most of the forms of the Church, based on the world view of the medievalists, are no longer relevant to the shifting certainties that form the existential basis of contemporary life.

What is relevant to the Christian renewal of the Church, Schallart believes, are the new experimental forms of the Mass that bring Christ down from the cross and put Him right on your dining room table. For a look at this new liturgy that is the major happening of the revitalized Church, we take you to Highland Park, New Jersey.

[PRIESTS AT WAR—IV]
Father Hafner Goes Underground

THAT WAS A FUNNY NOTICE the parishioners of St. James Church got in their mailboxes Monday morning, September 11. Mimeographed on the official rectory letterhead was what amounted to an ecclesiastical Declaration of Independence by the assistant pastor. The Rev. George J. Hafner let it be known that he was resigning from St. James Church to start an "experimental Catholic parish" in the diocese "without the bishop's permission," and that he expected to catch holy hell for this from the bishop but didn't care.

The next day, September 12, Fr. Hafner was stripped of his right to say Mass and to hear confessions by the Most Rev. George W. Ahr, bishop of the Trenton Diocese, who added a pastoral aside that Hafner was in danger of excommunication for creating "scandal," a phrase Catholic prelates often use to describe something that has made them mad.

Fr. Hafner came right back with a broadside at "a rigidly structured Church which emphasizes order more than freedom, which places a higher value on obedience than on zeal and initiative, which makes changes reluctantly and timidly even after the inadequacy of previous forms are proven."

Then, like the early Christians, he went underground.

If you look around, it is getting a little crowded down there in the 20th century catacombs. For underground, in almost every diocese, you can find priests and laymen experimenting with the Church's liturgy to make it mean something more in their lives than a place to mark in a missal. They are getting in increasing dutch from ecclesiastical authorities, which is surprising since all of the experimentation is thoroughly reverential and relatively orthodox. Nothing happens that didn't happen at the Last Supper, though there is no record of what vintage wine Christ served. Fr. Hafner, celebrating Mass last month in a living room in Highland Park, New Jersey, poured St. Emilion '59, although some priests do not have that sort of taste. There were about 25 young men and women in the living room, all of them members of Fr. Hafner's unsanctioned but booming experimental parish. He usually takes his gospel from contemporary commentary, and this week he read the Gospel according to Michael Harrington. After Mass, which was sung to guitar music, the 25 young men and women sat around and discussed something very Protestant like the role of Christian witness in their lives.

Fr. Hafner's parish is very social. He is proud of the fact that all of his parishioners are involved in some form of volunteer social work with the poor—an ideal form of living the gospel. After 18 years as a priest, he had to leave the Church to do this. The revolution Hafner is fostering is simply bringing the Church to the people—instead of the other way around, as the Church has had it for centuries.

The modern Church of the catacombs functions in other mind-expanding ways. In Redwood City, California, 27-year-old Fr. John McGuire, a priest of 14 months' practice, accepted a convert into Roman Catholicism the other evening with a brief lecture on the total arbitrariness of the Apostles' Creed, and the lack of necessity of formal Confession. He then said Mass in the convert's living room, using as the Eucharist bread the new Catholic's wife had baked herself. When the convert's eight-year-old son happened to announce, as eight-year-olds do, that he had just swallowed some of the Mass wine and that he liked it, Fr. McGuire looked up. "Son," he said, "you just made your First Communion." The young priest had something to celebrate that night himself, because in the morning, at the 9:30 a.m. Mass, he was going to preach his first sermon against the war in Vietnam.

On balance, it is priests like Fathers Hafner and McGuire who give the Catholic left its greatest potential as a revolutionary movement. If they succeed in making the Church relevant to even a small minority of America's 47 million Catholics—they have done it. (To that wide-screen 47 million count you can add all the disillusioned Catholics who didn't bother to go to Nazareth to register last year, plus millions of secular agnostics susceptible to conversion, like Fr. McGuire's convert.) Those "renewed" Catholics are very likely to take their Church's social teaching at its word. Its word is, largely, Christ's, and as Fr. Groppi or Fr. DuBay will promptly tell you, if Christ were around He would be in the National Liberation Front.

You don't usually do this with somebody who is supposed to be God, but if you had to classify Christ politically, a strong body of biblical authority exists which would put Him in the ultra left. Since He is the titular leader of all those Catholic radicals, they may have something going there. Can you imagine if Fr. Groppi had been Mario Savio's parish priest?

[DID WE FORGET SOMEBODY?]

NOW, WHERE DOES ALL THIS leave the Pope? Those on the American Catholic left who think about him, and it is intended as no slight on the Holy Father to point out that they do so only infrequently, say that it will not matter one rosary bead what he does. At best, they see him as the Fulton Sheen of Rome, who, while no revolutionary, is cautiously progressive and has his hands full keeping the Curia and the left Dutch bishops from murdering one another in the cathedral. Nevertheless, his encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (On the Development of Peoples) was called "warmed-over Marxism" in America and dismissed by Fortune magazine as taking a "dated stand and suspicious view of the workings of capitalist economic enterprise."

While expecting and needing no favors from Rome, the American Catholic left, as any strong left will, is having its effect on the Church government. Whatever the outcome, all this is the best thing that has happened to the Catholic Church since, probably, Jesus Christ.

Reporters for this article:

Marianne Hinckle, Peter Collier, Robert Avakian, Herbert Williamson.

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And they said Ken Kesey would never write again:

A page from Ken Kesey's Jail Notebook (*more on the following pages*)

Photograph by Bob Seidemann

[INTRODUCTION]

WHY DID THEY PUT Ken Kesey in jail? Because he's a novelist who won't write novels anymore. After they arrested him in his home in the redwoods on the San Francisco Peninsula, on April 24, 1965, he said, "I have written two novels which are forms into which life is molded. We all know life is not like that." A California State narcotics agent, William Wong, caught him painting flowers on the toilet bowl. He should have been *working* in his study. If he had been, all of those judges, district attorneys, sheriff's deputies and FBI agents would have respected him. His lawyers would have said, "Mr. Kesey was at work on an important new novel about acid."

Later they placed a second charge against him: mental cruelty toward the FBI, the Bureau of Customs and the State of Texas. While the Feds were looking for him in Mexico last fall, he put on red boots and a cowboy hat and rode a horse across the frontier singing drunkenly in a Texas accent. He passed as just another loyal Texan. He made it to San Francisco, where he announced he expected to delay his arrest for awhile "to rub salt into the wounds of J. Edgar Hoover."

The third charge made against him was disrespect for our nation's television traditions. While in hiding last October in a split-level home 17 miles from Hoover's San Francisco office, he spent many hours watching TV commercials. He said they tell you all you need to know about America's delight in violence. "They don't sell products, they sell prestige and security and ego-aggrandizement," he said. "And where that comes out is *war*, and the same anti-Oriental feeling I can remember in 1943, in my childhood."

These days California's marijuana laws are sometimes used like its vagrancy laws, to put socially undesirable people out of sight. The original charge against Kesey was possessing four roaches which, he said, must have been brought to his home by one of the 16 deputy sheriffs who raided the place after complaints by his influential neighbors against the excessive joy he had allowed his friends to demonstrate in the backyard, as they investigated the properties of LSD.

The few words Kesey has written since his arrest have been about as inscrutable as Lao-tse's. He doesn't communicate well with law enforcement people. Last year, after he jumped bail and fled to Mexico, his rococo Acid Test bus was found on a road in Humboldt County, California, with a note in his handwriting that said: "Ocean, ocean, ocean, I'll beat you in the end." The sheriff's deputies thought he had meant that he could beat the ocean by drowning himself in it; they searched the beaches for his body.

Kesey served the last five months of his jail sentence in the San Mateo County sheriff's "honor camp," which is situated in a redwood forest 45 miles south of San Francisco. He said he "tried to bring light and color" into this jail community. In the barracks he wears red, white and blue tennis shoes. He installed his hi-fi system beside the camp swimming pool. "You can't get along without a beat," he said. Sun-browned inmates lounged beside the pool this summer, listening to classic rock, folk rock and acid rock numbers from Kesey's record

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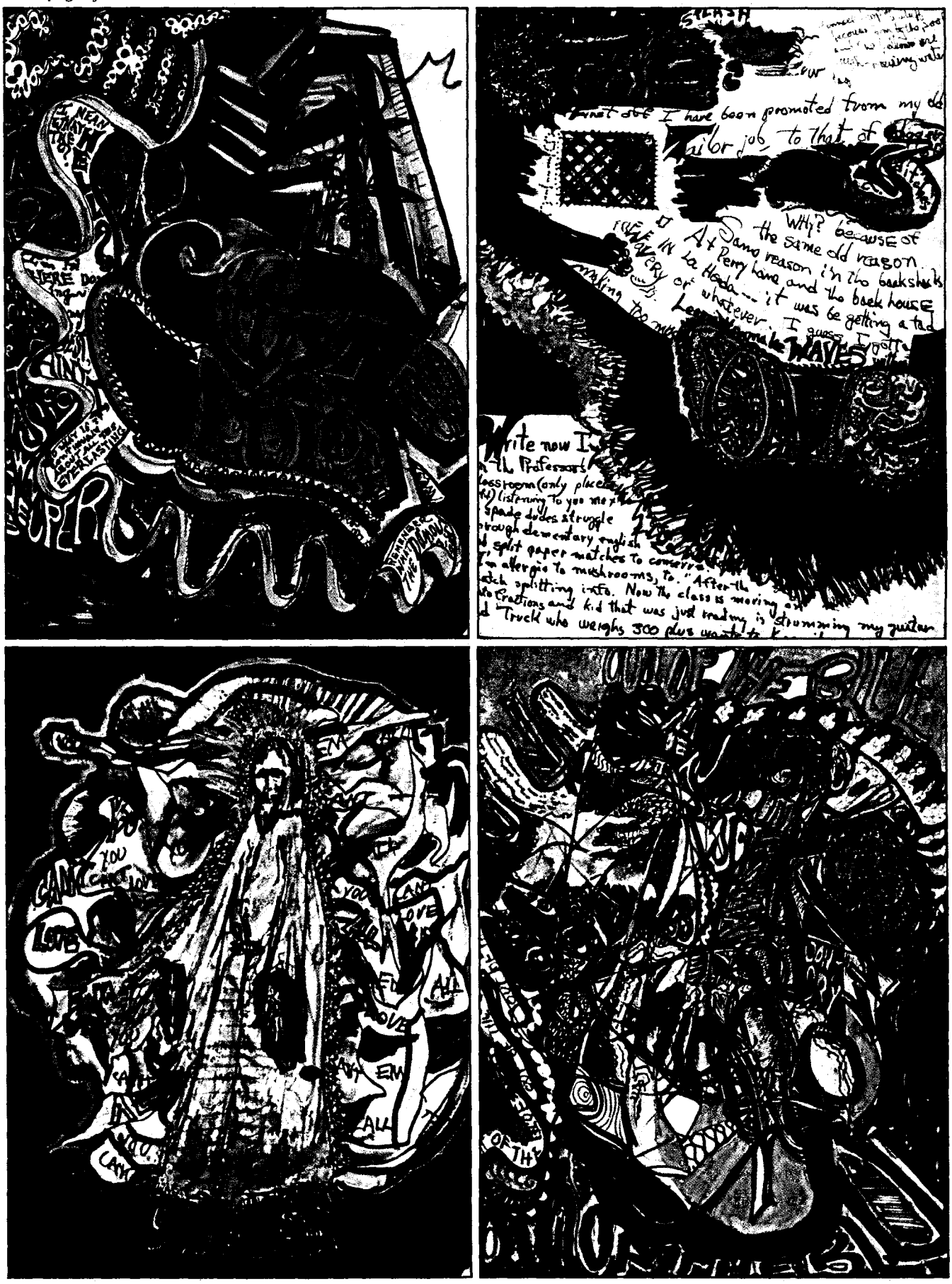
More pages from the notebook



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collection—including the Beatles' message, "I'd love to turn you on." (The men enjoyed the music but they don't like hippies. In this jail, Kesey said, "The shorter the hair, the more likely it is you're a hippie.") His first job was as the camp tailor. He had a station at the sewing machine in the hobby shop. Soon he had the walls covered with psychedelic murals. They transferred him to a road gang and painted over all of the murals but one.

Kesey's big problem is that he loves too much. He kept a notebook in his barracks locker and in the evenings filled it with spastic, pyrotechnic, color-drunk essays done with a watchmaker's precision, to show how much the world is worth loving *anyway*. When words came into the notebook, they revealed some of his deep sadness about the moral state of our country and his hatred, not for people, but for the jail game.

The jail keepers, he said, "are still playing the old game, that if you find the right man and punish him everything will be all right." As a result, he said, "Nobody's out in front in jail. You get the syndrome of the convict's lip, you learn to hold your mud. If they ask you how much is two and two, you learn not to tell them four."

He saved up his correct answers for the jail notebook. "This is crazier here than the nut house ever was," he said. (He worked for awhile in a mental hospital and got the material for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, a study of the institutional persecution of the creative spirit of man.)

This fall, when he gets out of jail, he plans to prepare a book about justice. "I think there's a good message in this camp," he said. "I'll convey what I'm allowed to, using what I think is the best medium, color, sound and words—maybe a record, and you can play it." The notebook will be the base of the book; but Kesey believes the jail game is played all over the land, out of jail.

The men who run the honor camp get pretty tense when they talk about him. They may be afraid of the power of his notebook. In September they even tried to get him released once a day under a work furlough program. The idea was to "rehabilitate" him. The petition was denied by Superior Court Judge Louis B. DeMatteis, a former district attorney of San Mateo County and a man who was supported by Pro America in his campaign for election to the bench.

—DONOVAN BESS

Exerpts:

FROM KEN KESEY'S JAIL DIARY

Aug 4, Friday

Allow me to introduce one of our prime heroes;

The patrol picks him up somewhere in Redwood City! In one side of the car out the other! "*Catch him!*" *Hard to do, he's small, muscled like a wolverine, shifty as a fox and a road-runner topnot on his head indicates the boy is* fast!!!

They get him hog tied and finally into the jail—"*We got a unidentified flying object here. What'll we do with him.*"

"*You kees my bleenking light,*" *says the UFO.*

He's Puerto Rican, neat little moustacho a black roadrunner shock of hair and fast!!! *A fireball crink shooter.* "*I never come down, man. I jess shoot crink and fuck, shoot crink and fuck. Can you deeg it?*"

He bunks next to me. Cant sleep for five nights. Prowls the dark barracks with a walk like a 200 pounder (he's many inches shy of five feet but muscled like a sonofabitch)

("*I never fucked my sister,*" *Sweet confesses to Fullum,* "*A man gotta draw the line somewhere.*")

Anyway, Speedy Lopez is our hero's name and shooting crink is his fame. And a good man to have in the barracks like a P.R. Cassidy. "*I don' hurt nobody; I just shoot crink . . . can you deeg it.*"

Maybe one of the best liked guys in camp. Good heart and most important you soon learn, much style. The Prankster reigns supreme in jail. And you dont never let nobody pull your covers. Man gets his covers pulled— no fucking class a-tall. (Yet, weird thing, the man with all cover, a young punk named talley, never *let his covers be pulled yet was least liked of all. It was that thing in his eyes that said to you* "*I'm* scared *to* death *under these blankets.*")

Not so with speedy. Littlest man here but no fear in his face. Just joy and dance when he's coming back from Redwood today with that prick (Coz forgive me for straying from the Teaching) Glick who is the transportation man they don't make a corner and Ka Zomb into the ditch upside down maybe bad maybe dead but when Speedy finally scrambles out from under, what?

"*Can you deeg it, man?*"

Did you ever figure out what it was that she and Bill Joe tossed off the Tallahatchie Bridge?

My first visitor appeared across the table from me, with very little hocus pocus or showmanship . . . simply was there, glowing like a bar of Dial soap and speaking to me as though we'd been interrupted only moments before

You young Americans . . . of course I understand the necessity of the force and I'm not complaining mind you . . . but such impatience at the beginning of such a show . . . shook his head in benevolent disgust over a ream of papers and vanished.

Tired dead sniff time.

With all the fucking deputies suspecting me of being loaded because I'm taking kalium, some kind of middle mind tranquilizer and my clothes are dirty and I'my hot and pissed and the paper is even splotchy and I cant sleep because I've got TIME is 455 turn in tolls *And I damn near climb the wall with guilt—oh mosquito, fuck off will you.*

Aug 12.

Today I am re-assigned to the Bushy crew, which means out on the road which means work (I've heard how often a bastard Bushy is) which means again "*Something is happening and you don't know what it is.*"

Well what it is not going to be is the tailor shop.

Dismissed for the same reason I was dismissed from the VA . . . not showing enough interest in the organization and inmates.

Or because material was tacked to the walls.

Lots of bus talk. What it means is maybe it can't happen there.

Oh bittah, bittah is the sweet of the honey somebody aint got.

Can you deeg it, man?

"Don't sit there,"

They tell me—

"That doors about to
open in a couple minutes.

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A Tank

how rent— coming going
"How come you overflowing
leave camp— cons old
how *come* you cons learning
leave camp, bloods keeping quiet
it being the
best of all
possible jails.

and Knowing.

"That sounds like Mr' K."

"What we're you doing staying in Tank A.

"I was hitted by a tree. Now I'm in to have an X Ray to show I'm a nut. I been going like a washing machine for the last two days.

"Hey Deputy Dawg," somebody hollers from somewhere. "They just snuffed a dude in T2."

And I
"But, dig! Just developed
I mean a strong
eatin'crabs? suspicioun
of crabs

scratch
scratch

Them motherfuckers is *good*! Specially in a good gumbo with some shrimp."

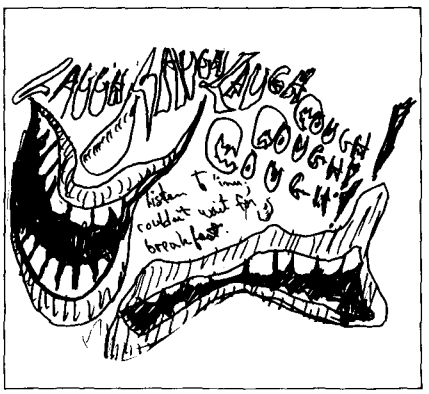
Not *that* kind of Crabs.

But listen: I dont have any habit. I mean you dont see me running around telling up sawdust in a piece of paper.

THE HIPPY in the TANK NEXT DOOR:

I just moved in playing my stereo at moderate volume and this motherfucker comes banging in the door . . . "You gonna play that motherfuckin radio that loud every night."

"Mercy, now, most nights I'm gonna really turn it up.


LAUGH
LAUGH
COUGH
COUGH
CO

A Talk with the Front

by Sol Stern

ONE OF THE GREAT AMERICAN delusions about Vietnam, shared even by many of official Washington's critics, is that the key to peace lies in Hanoi. For reasons of political convenience America continues to ignore its real "enemy"—the National Liberation Front. And yet, despite the half million foreign troops ranged against it, despite the substantial aid it is getting from the North, it is the Front, alive and doing quite well on its own, which is confounding the Pentagon.

The evidence, even from American sources, makes it quite clear that it is the NLF which has managed to neutralize the American military throughout most of South Vietnam and frustrate the American and South Vietnamese pacification efforts. In the face of the most massive military effort ever conducted against a revolutionary movement, the NLF infrastructure has actually become stronger and more deeply entrenched in the villages of South Vietnam.

Thus, if there is ever to be peace in Vietnam, the U.S. will eventually have to deal directly with the NLF on its own terms, as if it, and not the Saigon generals, were the government of South Vietnam. The Front is extremely confident now that that is exactly what will happen. That confidence was the principal impression I gathered at the recent extraordinary conference in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, attended by 41 assorted anti-war Americans and delegations from the NLF and from North Vietnam.

That the Front was willing to involve itself in such close contact with a diverse and undisciplined group of Americans (none of whom were members of the Communist Party or any other Marxist sect) reflected its growing sense of political assurance.

The NLF's eight-member delegation was as important as any it has ever sent to an international conference. It marked the first official and public contact the Front has had with any American group.

It was a crucial time for the Front. Just prior to the opening of the meeting with the Americans, it released its new political program, an 18-page document that superseded and made significant additions to the earlier program of 1960.

The new program had been adapted in the early part of August at a special congress attended by 100 to 150 delegates somewhere in NLF territory in South Vietnam. The NLF released the new program on September 1, two days before the Saigon government's elections. The new program was thus, in some sense, the Front's political response to the attempts of the Americans to obtain political legitimacy for the Thieu-Ky regime through the elections. But the program also defined a turning point in the war for the NLF.

As the NLF saw it, the American escalation and the presence of half a million foreign troops on South Vietnamese soil had radically altered the nature of its struggle. Confident that they had learned to cope with the "new war" which the Americans had launched against them, the NLF were now ready to turn the heavy Americanization of the war to political advantage.

The stalemate in the military field has allowed for a political polarization. As the Front sees it, the political choices for the people of South Vietnam are more clear now than at any other time. Either you are with the Front (either officially or secretly) or you are with the Americans. The South Vietnamese Army, as one of the delegates put it, "has been relegated to the job of being watchdogs for the Americans." "Third force"

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groups, such as the Buddhists, are, in the view of the Front, now incapable of any significant action as the result of the Americanization of the war.

The new political program responds to the American takeover by stressing far more than any previous Front document the nationalist character of its struggle. It excludes any mention of socialism. It gives detailed guarantees of the right of private ownership of the means of production and of the right to own land. And the program makes a broad appeal on nationalist grounds to elements in the Saigon administration and Army to make their private deals now with the Front.

A PRECISE CLARIFICATION of the meaning of the new program and of the Front's current posture was offered to this reporter through an exclusive interview with the head of the NLF delegation, and a member of its Central Committee, Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh. One of the most important persons in the NLF hierarchy and a woman of extraordinary presence and dignity, Mrs. Binh has been an active revolutionary for half of her 40 years. For that activity, she has spent a total of four years in the jails of Saigon, first under the French and then under the Diem regime. Elected to the Central Committee in 1962, when it consisted of only 35 members, she has been a long-time associate of Nguyen Huu Tho, chairman of the NLF. They worked together in the early days of the Diem regime in the Saigon peace movement before it was suppressed and Tho was jailed. Earlier, Tho had been her attorney when she was imprisoned by the French.

Mrs. Binh is one of the most traveled members of the Central Committee, having headed NLF delegations to Cairo, Peking, Moscow, Indonesia and North Korea. She frequently moves clandestinely in and out of South Vietnam and was in the Saigon area earlier this year.

It is clear that Mrs. Binh speaks authoritatively for the Front. She emphasized again, as she did officially at the conference, that the key to the new political program is the new role of the American military.

"There has been a change in the schemes of the U.S. government," said Mrs. Binh, "and that change has had an effect on the situation in the South. The direct participation of American troops has helped the people in South Vietnam to better realize than they could in the past the policies of the U.S. Even members of the puppet Army and the puppet administration have come to realize that the present war is not in their own interests."

The current confidence of the Front must be seen against the background of the strategic discussions that went on inside its ranks earlier. It was in 1964 that the decision was apparently made to go over to what NLF doctrine refers to as the "armed struggle." In the earlier phases of the struggle against the Diem regime, the NLF had pinned their hopes on what they called the "general uprising"—an emphasis on achieving victory through mass popular revolts in the cities and a guerrilla war of attrition in the countryside. The decision to go over to a full-scale military effort undoubtedly came in for some second guessing when the massive U.S. military commitment began in 1965. And when the NLF first had to confront the massive new American firepower, there might well have been some demoralization. Many outside observers have regarded the NLF decision to meet the American military buildup head-on as its fatal mistake. Now, however, it is clear that the Front feels that it has met the brunt of the American military effort and managed to neutralize it. It now appears to believe that the U.S. commitment is actually working to the NLF's advantage in the political field, allowing it to emerge as the only force in the country capable of standing up against foreign domination.

When I asked Mrs. Binh what the most important new elements in the program were, she replied: "There are many, but the most significant amendments aim for the realization of a policy of the broadest union possible to spearhead the struggle against American aggression. The political program shows concern about the interests of the puppet administration and Army. It shows them the way to join the Front. That is the spirit that runs throughout the program."

Previous NLF policy statements have always emphasized their desire to enter into a "coalition" government with other forces in the country to achieve a government free of American influence. But there now seems to be a new approach toward achieving broader unity. The most striking thing about the new program is that the word "coalition" is not even used. Instead, there is merely a reference to setting up a "national union democratic government." When I asked Mrs. Binh about this omission, she replied that it was merely a problem of the English translation of the program. She said it should have been rendered a "coalition government of a national and democratic character."

Yet there is a sense in which the current NLF approach to "coalition" has radically changed. The current NLF posture de-emphasizes the importance of other groups in South Vietnam, such as the Buddhists. It had always been assumed that the NLF would be willing to enter into direct negotiations with such groups toward setting up a coalition government. During the conference, however, Mrs. Binh referred to the so-called moderate Buddhists as "more and more discredited." Even the more militant Buddhists led by Thich Tri Quang were dismissed by Mrs. Binh in the following terms: "They have more or less nationalist ideals, but they have private personal political ambitions and in their line of struggle they aren't determined to oppose the American aggression. Instead, they rely on the U.S. They want to build a third force, but they they can't build any force."

In private, Mrs. Binh elaborated on this point by suggesting, in effect, that any nationalist groups or "third forces" with whom the Front might once have considered discussing a coalition government have now either been suppressed or rendered irrelevant by the American involvement. "We do hope," said Mrs. Binh, "there are forces outside the Front and still inside the enemy machine who will realize the light and seek joint efforts with us. There have been some who we have had joint efforts with. But their forces are not well organized."

With the emphasis of the program on secret arrangements with the "puppet Army," it seems that the Front has moved away from the notion of a coalition government reached through direct negotiations between the Front and other powerful organized groups. Instead, the Front seems to be embarked on a course of trying to create a broad working coalition secretly and quietly while the fighting is still going on, incorporating new elements directly into the Front structure. This is reinforced by the information passed on by Mrs. Binh that the Front has recently filled about four or five of the seats on the Central Committee that it has always reserved for emerging new groups. Mrs. Binh also revealed that

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the presidium of the Central Committee of the Front held enlarged sessions last May to make an assessment of the "dry season" campaign, and that new people outside the Front were invited to several special sessions. Mrs. Binh mentioned in particular that several non-Front intellectuals from Saigon had participated. "In general," said Mrs. Binh, "in the cities there are loose organizations of people who may approve of the political program of the Front but who are not on any committee of the Front. However they are now being invited to take part in discussions with the Central Committee."

I asked Mrs. Binh what would be the concrete process leading from the discussions it is now holding to the creation of the broad national government which is its goal. She replied: "Before the setting up of a government of broad national unity, there must be a provisional government. Our goal is to have a government that genuinely represents the whole people. Such a government could be established only in conditions of a peaceful South Vietnam. In conditions of war, if a government is to be established, its representativeness has limits. Therefore, it is necessary to have a provisional government."

THUS IT IS CLEAR that the Front, together with other elements, keeps open the option of declaring itself a provisional government at some time in the future, even while the fighting is going on. It is not clear whether any such plan is in the works now, but in some respects the Front has recently been acting a little more like a government. For example, earlier this year the NLF representative in Cambodia was granted full diplomatic status. And at about the same time, the NLF exchanged ambassadors with Cuba. I was told at the conference that the Cuban ambassador is actually somewhere inside NLF-controlled territory in South Vietnam.

Perhaps it is this increasing political confidence in its own legitimacy that allowed Mrs. Binh to acknowledge for the first time in general terms that the NLF is getting support from the North. Mrs. Binh had this to say about the question: "We think the people of South Vietnam should be the *main* [my emphasis] force to settle their problems. However we think it is our legitimate right to receive assistance of any kind from North Vietnam, including volunteers. In the face of aggression from the U.S. which gets help from 12 countries, it is our legitimate right to ask for and receive assistance from the North and other countries, including military assistance. As to the nature of that assistance, you know we are at war and right now we can't tell you specifically."

In the light of the statement of help from the North, it is important that the new program speaks of negotiations leading to eventual reunification with the North "without any pressure from either side." Mrs. Binh emphasized that despite the strong feeling for national reunification in both North and South, there would be many practical problems to be overcome and the process could take many years.

The only serious question that the Front's political program does not deal with is the question of negotiations with the Americans. The NLF has never indicated officially that it sought such negotiations. Thus there is a widespread view that the NLF position is intransigent and that they seek only a military victory over the U.S. But Mrs. Binh made the following statement categorically: "We don't speak of a military victory. We say that after the liberation of Vietnam we will set up a broad national government."

The term "liberation" is clearly broad enough to include many different processes, including one that leads to a political settlement of the war through direct negotiations with the Americans. The Front will never officially talk about the possibility of these negotiations at this time because to do so when the U.S. does not even recognize its existence, and at a time when the U.S. continues to escalate in the South, would be to concede in advance that the U.S. military strategy has forced NLF concessions. It would be an admission of weakness that would further encourage the hawks in Washington. "There is no point in discussing conferences while the war is being intensified," said Mrs. Binh. "Holding a conference is not a problem for us only. It is a matter for others, too. But the U.S. still ignores the Front."

However, Mrs. Binh gave the very strong impression that prior withdrawal of U.S. troops was not a condition for negotiations. What definitely seem to be prior NLF conditions are: 1) recognition of the Front, and 2) some sort of ceasefire in the South. There was a clear implication that if these two conditions could be met, the NLF would participate in a conference.

"There has been a settlement to the previous war," said Mrs. Binh. "I don't think it is impossible to settle the problems of the present war. Do you ever hear of the French complaining about the settlement of the previous war? We consider ourselves people who know fair play. We are intransigent only as far as independence is concerned."

In the meantime, Mrs. Binh made it clear that the NLF supported the January 28 statement of North Vietnam that if the U.S. unconditionally and permanently stopped the bombing of the North, the North would come to the conference table. Mrs. Binh said, "We would welcome the end of bombing of the DRV (Democratic Republic of Vietnam). If there could be negotiations between the U.S. and the DRV, we would welcome the goodwill of the government of the DRV."

Of course, the NLF and the DRV continue to insist that there can be no discussions of the situation in the South, except with the Front having the "decisive voice." One possible scenario that would be acceptable to the Front might go something like this:

The U.S. unconditionally stops the bombing of the North. Talks begin between the North and the U.S. These talks lead to a ceasefire in the South and a recognition of the Front by the U.S. The Front is then brought into the negotiations to deal directly with the U.S. on the question of withdrawal of U.S. troops. The withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops could be tied to a staged U.S. troop withdrawal from the South.

If all of this seems somewhat unrealistic, it is only because an unreal political climate in the U.S. has made it so. Unfortunately, many Americans, even in the anti-war movement, continue to delude themselves about halfway "compromise" solutions that will allow some American presence in Vietnam. It is as if the American slaughter of the Vietnamese has given the U.S. some special prerogatives in that country. But for the Vietnamese who are willing to die for it, the principle of withdrawal of all foreign troops is the only reality. And if the only problem for the U.S. is saving face, a remark Mrs. Binh made to me bears on that. "If Johnson wants to withdraw the troops," she said, "we will make it very easy for him."

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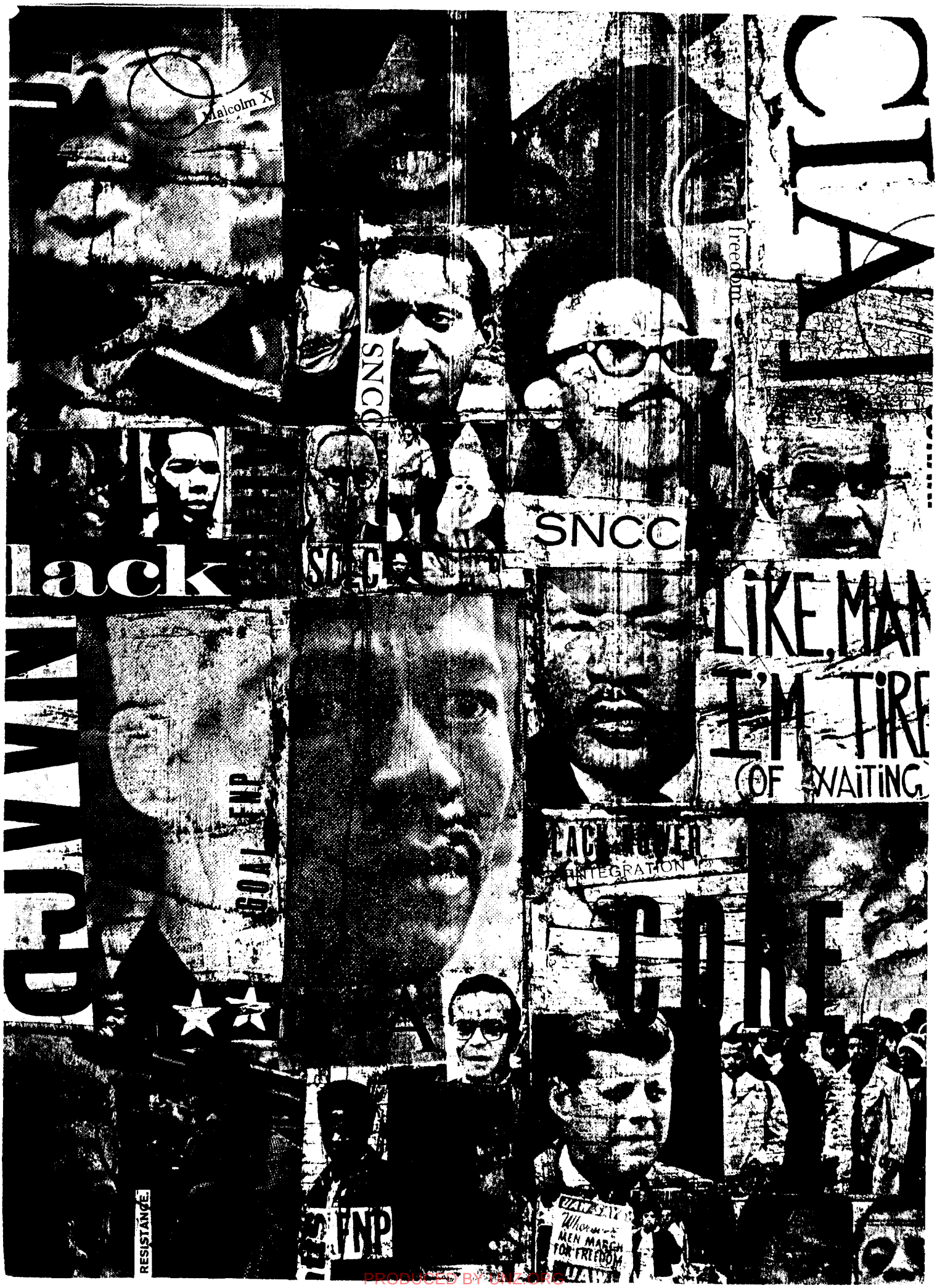

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The Man Who Cried I Am

[1]

AMSTERDAM

IT WAS A LATE AFTERNOON in the middle of May and Max Reddick was sitting in an outdoor cafe on the Leidseplein toying with a Pernod. The factories and shops were closing and traffic streamed from Leidse Straat onto the Plein. There were many bicycle riders. Through eyes that had been half glazed over for several days with alcohol, Librium and morphine, Max looked appreciatively at the female cyclists. The men were so average. He quickly dismissed them. The girls were something else again, big-legged and big-buttocked. (Very much like African women, Max thought.) They peddled past, their chins held high, their knees promising for fractions of seconds only, a flash of white above the stockingtops and then, the view imminent, the knees rushed up and obscured all view. Once in a while Max would see a girl peddling saucily, not caring if her knees blocked out the sights above or not. Max would think: Go, baby!

The cafe was empty. That was a good sign. It meant that the people Max used to know in Amsterdam, the painters, writers and sculptors, the composers and song-and-dance men who were the year-round Black Peters for the Dutch, the jazzmen, were working well. They would be out later and drink Genever or beer until they became high, wanted to talk about their work or go make love. Maybe they would go up to the Kring, if they were members or honored guests, and play four-ball billiards while eating fresh herring. It was time for the fresh herring, the green herring.

Max glanced at the sky. God! he thought. It was like a clear high-noon sky in New York. No night would appear here until nine, but daybreak would come galloping up at close to three in the morning. He finished his Pernod and twisted to find the waiter, raising his hand at the same time. He felt something *squish* as he moved, and the meaning of the feeling caught at his voice. "*Ober*," he said, then more loudly, "*Ober*." The waiter, clad in a red jacket, black tie and black pants looked up with a smile. This was a new face, a new American. A little older than many others, and a sick look about him at that! Painter, writer, sculptor, jazz musician, dancer . . .?

"Pernod," Max said. The waiter nodded and retreated to the bar. Max felt a sharp, gouging pain and he gripped his glass tightly. Water came to his eyes and he felt sweat pop out on his forehead. "Goddamn," he whispered. When the pain subsided, he rose and went to the men's room inside the cafe.

When he came out he noticed that the fresh Pernod was already on his table and he said "*Dank U*" to the waiter. That phrase he remembered, as he remembered others in French, German, Spanish, Italian, but he could barely put a sentence together in them. He sat down again, glancing at his watch. Where was she?

She had told him in their exchange of polite letters that she had returned to the gallery. If that was so, she should be passing the cafe at any moment, passing with that long, springy stride, so strange because she was small and not thin, passing with her hair billowing back over her shoulder. He had seen her pass many, many times. Before. Before, when he had sat deep inside the cafe watching, and would only call to her when she was almost out of sight. "Lost your cool then, man," he now whispered to himself. "You ba-lew it!" He always thought of the canals when he thought of her. Now they would be reflecting with aching clarity the marvelous painter's sky. The barges and boats would be on the way in, and soon the ducks and swans would be tucking their necks in to sleep. He had to sleep soon, too; it might prolong his life. A few days more.

Ah yes, he thought, *you Dutch motherfuckers. I've returned. "A Dutch man o' warre that sold us twenty negars," John Rolfe wrote. Well, you-all, I bring myself. Free! Three hundred and forty-five years after Jamestown. Now . . . how's that for the circle come full?*

by John A. Williams

Illustration by Fred Otnes

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He did not really care about the Dutch except that she was Dutch. She was thirty-five now, fourteen years younger than he. Would she still be as blond? (How he had hated that robust blondness at first after the malnourished black of Africa. The blondness had been so much like that of the Swedish blondes, jazz freaks who lived on jazz concerts, who saw the black musicians in their staged cool postures; but how he had been attracted to it as well!) Did he love her still—billowing blond hair; sturdy swimmer's legs; long, sinewy stride on such a small body and all? (And all? What was all? A memory. Nineteen years old.) He supposed he did love her, transposed, a bit bleached out, in a clinical way, the way you'd discuss it in an analyst's office. *Anal*, he thought, *list*. Shit list. Man, am I on that! But he did want to tell her he was sorry; tell her why it hadn't worked. He was glad he was still on his feet and able to move about. If he had stayed in the hospital in New York, it would have happened, his dying, and somehow she would have learned about it. No. Stand on two feet and tell her you had her mixed up with someone who happened nineteen years ago.

Where *is* she? He would hate to go to her house, but he would if he had to. Maybe he shouldn't have come. Maybe he should have gone right back out to Orly and returned to the hospital in New York. Comfort at least. But he *was* here and he hadn't been any drunker than usual when he decided to come by train. There were only three places to go after Harry Ames dropped dead, another section of Paris, New York or Amsterdam. Hell, he planned to go to Amsterdam anyway. Who was he shucking, himself, *now*? It really hurt to think of old Harry going like that. He should have been drunk and stroking and grinding and talking trash in some broad's ear. He always said he wanted to go like that.

Then he thought he saw her and he came half out of his chair, but it was someone else. He sat down slowly. How would it go anyway? She would be walking with that stride that made her seem even smaller, it was so long. He would call out. She would stop, for his voice would be the most familiar of all voices. Unbelievingly she would come near the table. He would not rise, merely sit there and motion to a chair with a smile on his face. (Haw! Haw! Surprise, surprise!) He would have a drink in his hand, perhaps even the one he was holding.

The stride was not the same: he fitted it into the one he remembered watching in Holland, Spain, France, Puerto Rico, St. Thomas, Manhattan, East Hampton, Vermont, Mexico . . . There was something sad about her stride now. The heels of her shoes still rapped sharply on the pavement and the face, that small face with the cheekbones riding high along the sides, was still ready for the smile, the bright, lyrical "*Daaag!*" And that wise body, curving with motion. Her hair was darker, yes, like gold left too long in the open.

"Margrit! [Lillian!] Margrit! [Lillian!] Margrit! [Lillian!]" he shouted, coming out of his chair like a shot, the pain grabbing deeply at his rectum, and he was halfway across the street, all the while fighting the urge to grab himself, tear himself inside out.

And she stopped. Her mouth sprang open. Her dark blue eyes went bulging. With the deepest part of the eye he saw her start impulsively toward him, but she caught herself and stood waving as a leaf in some slight, capricious wind. He stopped too, out of pain and uncertainty; he had blown his lines again. But when he stopped she moved forward. On she came, the bright face ready to brighten even more, the stride now full, hell-rapping, confident. He stood waving, surprised at his own lack of cool, aghast at the waterfall of love he had thought dammed.

"Mox, Mox, it *is* you?" she said.

That goddamn broad A, he thought, but he said, "Yes." His arms trembled at his sides. Should he open them and put them around her? Should he simply stand and wait, then wilt when she placed hers around him? Signals. As she approached, her right hand darted out before her, thumb extended ludicrously in the air. Resigned, he took it, shook it gently and placed his left hand over hers. He led her to the table. "Please sit." It pained him to look at her figure. She wore a blue sweater which no matter how loose it might have been, would have shown her breasts to tender and exciting advantage; they were always so white and fragile, so vulnerable. Her hips were fuller now. Time does do its work. And her swimmer's legs, big-calved and just short of being too heavily ankled, still made him itch to stroke them from top to—

He looked into Margrit's clear blue eyes. He moved his hand up her arm. Quite suddenly his eyes grew wet with remembering and even as he turned his head to fake a cough, he knew that the Pernod had helped to bring the tears on. "Whiskey," Max said to the waiter, who was watching them. Give her something quick, Max thought, before she starts remembering and runs away. Remembers the bad things.

But she was remembering some things already. She looked at him directly, head on, unblinking, without fear or remorse or pity—without, goddamn it, he thought, *anything*. But hell, he had never been able to decipher her looks, not once except when she cried. God, make me sober—no drunker. ". . . and another Pernod," he called, fingering with surprise the half-full glass already in his hand. He took a deep breath and fought down a rising pain. "How are you?" he said.

"Okay, Mox. You? Hi."

"Fine. Okay. Hi yourself."

"When did you come?"

"Today. About three hours ago."

"Are you well?"

"I—never better." He patted her hand.

"You look sick." She smiled her thanks at the waiter who placed the drinks before them.

"No. Just tired. Took the train from Paris."

"Paris? Harry died, didn't he? It was in *De Arbeiderspers* and *Het Parool* and some other papers. Were you there?"

Max smiled. The Europeans. The goddamn Europeans with their Black Peters and Black Madonnas and blackface celebrations. Five hundred years of guilt transposed into something like vague concern for anyone with a black skin. But Harry was loved more in Europe—and hated too—but not more than back home. There was some kind of balance here that the New York *Times* and the Chicago *Sun-Times* and the "Skibbidum Times" could never have when it came to Harry Ames. He spoke: "I was just a bit too late. We were to have drinks that day—"

"Oh, Mox, it must have been awful for you."

He felt angry. "Hell, it was all right! Harry was my friend, like a brother. But he had to go. We all have to go. He went quick. Didn't hurt at all. I'm all right. You know me."

Margrit bent her head and studied her Scotch. It was a very

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expensive alcohol. Genever would have been all right for her, even though in New York she had come to like Scotch. Yes, she knew. Harry's death had hurt Max. There was a time when he never admitted anything, but then, she thought, there was another time when he did. She stole a look at him. Yes, he was still handsome. He was graying evenly through his hair and moustache, but the lines in his square face had deepened, as if cut by a tired sculptor creating a hardness to offset the wide, soft eyes. But the eyes (how that soft look had deceived her!) were red, the almost amber-colored pupils diffused as though in the process of melting. He *isn't* well! she thought with a shock. "How long are you here?"

Max drank from the unfinished Pernod and then sipped from the other. "Not long. I wanted to tell you something, Margrit. Margrit, baby, I have news for you!"

His voice had raised and gone spinning loudly into space. She looked at him with cautious eyes. She knew the waiter and bartender, and the customers who were coming in now were used to *Negar uitbundigheid*, Negro exuberance; they smiled at it. It was the image they had.

"What is your news, Mox?" Margrit was suddenly irritated. She and Max had spent so much time talking about images. "Is it good news? You have come all this way to tell me?" She smiled thinly, "Are you to be married?"

He rose and touched her shoulder. Automatically she lent support to his unsteady fingers. "Will you wait until I return? I have to pee." He giggled. She smiled. But as soon as he had left her, she turned to watch him. Something was the matter.

Max wavered to the men's room again. A vicious cycle. If he didn't drink, he wouldn't have to urinate. To urinate was to suffer the most intense pain. But, if he didn't drink he would have to take either the pills or the morphine tucked into the pouch of the jock strap he was wearing. He had thrown the cup away. The morphine got the pain right by the balls he thought, with a weak chuckle, but it didn't let him operate the way he had to during the day. But then the pain was growing every day. It gripped him at the most inopportune moments and left him breathless, weak, and with his eyes watering. *Jesus Christ!* he moaned, leaning against a wall which for a few seconds seemed to have vanished altogether. Did Herod ever have it so bad? He pushed himself away from the wall and went into one of the stalls. Clean. At least the Dutch wouldn't give him as many germs as the French. He took out the cotton and looked at it. It was soaked through with dark red blood. Almost came through that time, he thought, and pulled a roll of fresh cotton from his pocket and tore off a piece. This he pushed gently into place. While sitting, he pulled at the jock strap and looked at the plastic five-cc syringe and at the morphine itself. He felt his breast pocket to see if the needle was still there. Not now, later. The pain subsided.

He returned to the table and without looking at her said, "Margrit, I'm sorry. Easy to say. Said it before, but believe me, I am sorry. Late, I know. Don't want anything. I can't want anything, not even you again. I just wanted to see you and say that."

"Well . . ." she wanted to say that it was all right, but she knew it wasn't and he knew it too. Then she wanted to reach across the table and slap him as hard as she could. *Sorry*! But the black Americans were all the same: they walked away from things mumbling, "Sorry." Sorry! After a moment, the bitterness ebbed. "But you look tired. Maybe you should get some rest. If you like, we can talk later [more sorry!] Where are you staying?"

Come full circle on the Dutch, he was thinking as she spoke. He knew he was giving her answers. ("Yes, a little tired. Don't know where I'll be staying. Maybe the American. Do it up right. Last trip, Ducks, ho?")

"One more drink," he said aloud. "Then I'll get my bag and go to the hotel. If you have dinner with me. In that corner. You know." He rushed on, not wanting her to decline. "You know where we sat for four hours just watching people pass . . ."

Margrit thought, Yes, I know, I remember, I remember, and the waiters trying to rush us, and it seemed as if the sun would never come down.

". . . and maybe after dinner we can find Roger and some of the other guys. How are they doing. Do you see them often?" He paused. He didn't give a damn about Roger or the others. It was too late. "Will you, will you have dinner?"

"No more drinks then," she said.

"All right." He breathed deeply in relief.

"I will get your bag," she said.

"No you won't," he said. Then with sudden vehemence he said, "Will you *stop* doing things for me!"

Unruffled she said, "Mox, you will walk across the street to the hotel and get your room. I will touch up a bit, call a taxi and get your bag. The driver will help me and the hotel boys will help me. Give me the ticket." She held out her hand for the ticket as his hands went limply into pocket after pocket. Finally he found it. Taking it she said, "You don't look well. I am worried."

"How can you be worried?"

She hunched her shoulders. "I just am. Please go."

"All right, Maggie." He sucked in his breath quickly. The pain. She was right. Let her get the goddamn bag. Get to the hotel. Fast! Get off your feet. Take a pill.

"What is it?" she asked.

"A belch. I had to belch."

"Happy New Year, then."

"Thanks. Shall we go now?"

He paid the waiter and they left. "It will not be long," she said.

"All right. Maggie?"

"What?"

"I am truly sorry."

"Shut up, Mox," she said, not unpleasantly. "I will not be long."

He wondered if her apartment was the same. It overlooked one of the canals, had high ceilings and dark musty hallways. Max wondered if the walls were still thick with the paintings of friends, or if the bedroom was the same, with the windows to the east so that as soon as the sun took a notion to rise, *whop*! daylight in the room. And in that room, he thought, discovering without surprise that he had the key to his hotel room in his hand and that he was following the bellman, she would be touching herself up a bit.

Suddenly he wanted to listen to someone else's rhythms; his own were sonorous, too labored. He paused. There was something he wanted, something . . . Ah, a paper. He had just picked up the *Tribune* when he saw, out of the corner of his eye, another Negro. How the eye catches color in a country where there is so little! Or how that same eye catches no color

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—an albino in Africa—where color abounds. Kiss my ass, Max thought, drawing back without knowing why, Alfonse Edwards.

[2]

AMSTERDAM

HE SAT WAIST-DEEP in the lukewarm water of his bath and watched it turn slowly from a clear to pinkish color. He could hear the trams ringing their bells as they pulled off from the stop in front of the hotel. Why, he wondered, couldn't Alfonse Edwards be in Amsterdam too? What instinct (Negroes not only had that good old natural rhythm, but instinct too) had made him draw back? True, he had *not* liked Edwards from the first, from Nigeria. Even less since he had been with Harry when Harry died.

Edwards had told it like this:

He and Harry were walking out of Rue de Berri and paused at the corner waiting for a traffic light to change. Harry had gone down just like an FFI caught in the crossfire of snipers. Max imagined that crowds gathered and someone finally recognized that dark round face, the bitterness on it suddenly replaced by surprise, and shouted, "*Le M'sieu, le romancier américain.*"

"Boom, like that," Edwards had said in Paris, his lean face suggesting rather than actually possessing sorrow. Max remembered that even then he wondered just why Harry would bother with a type like that. He must have been getting senile. Edwards was a black Ivy Leaguer. Close-cropped hair, for he *wanted* Europeans to know that he was American. The other Negroes let their hair grow long and bushy—nappy—in order to be mistaken for Africans. Not Edwards. American all the way. Red, white and black.

So, anyway, there was Harry down in the street at the corner where the Rue de Berri runs into the Champs-Elysées, with the Arc de Triomphe humped up through the noon haze. Harry was down and didn't get up and later there was Edwards describing his death: "Boom, like that," and Max also thought then, these hippies, Ivy League or Watermelon League, they never learn. English is limiting but it's all we know well, and there are times and places when it should be used, such as when describing how Harry died. Harry would never die "Boom, like that."

Why not? Because he was too goddamned evil. And why else not? Because.

Max had taken the morphine as much for the shock of Harry's death as for the pain. He stood at the rear of the small, hastily assembled crowd within the walls of Cimetière on Montparnasse. Edwards was there. Charlotte, Harry's wife, was there, a few Americans, like Iris Stapleton of the nightclubs, painters and writers. There were some Africans, a few Indians. And it was only twenty hours after Harry had died. Very few of them had been summoned by Charlotte. The papers had announced his death, and they had come unbidden. Max stood there drunk with the drug, sick with pain and shock, and suddenly he noticed that Michelle Bouilloux, even more isolated from the small crowd than himself, was staring at him. He *thought* she was staring. Max turned back to listen once more to the eulogies. When he turned again to Michelle, he let his eyes roam; her husband wasn't there. She seemed to have moved closer to him, and now he knew she was staring from under her veil. And she was doing something with her hands, he couldn't tell what, because she was wearing black gloves and moving her hands against the background of a black suit. Then she took off one glove, and one startlingly white hand showed, and one of its fingers curled back and forth at him. Her eyes seemed to come through the veil. Max thought, Ah, Michelle, Michelle, he's dead. The eulogies were over. The crowd started to break up. Michelle threw one glance at Charlotte, who even now was approaching Max, snatched up her veil displaying a glint of red hair, pointed fiercely to herself, then stumbled toward the gate. "Please join us, Max," Charlotte said. Alfonse Edwards was standing at her shoulder.

"No," Max said. He had seen enough men cremated in tanks, the bodies curling and snapping and frying in their own juices. He wasn't going to sit in anybody's anteroom and wait for Harry to be cooked down to ashes. "But why?" he croaked as the others, not invited to wait for the Harry-fry, gathered behind her and Edwards. "Why couldn't you let him lay around a little while so people could come and look at him. He'd like that."

"Oh, Max, shut up," Charlotte said, turning from him. Edwards paused before turning himself, and there was nothing in his look and yet everything. "To hell with you too," Max said and left, caught a taxi, picked up his bag and took the train to Amsterdam.

WHY ELSE NOT? Michelle Bouilloux. He glanced at his watch. M. Bouilloux would be home now. Maybe not. Maybe he hadn't seen her at the funeral at all. Hell, he wasn't sure of anything anymore except that he had a great, raging pain in the ass. And then, having thought of Charlotte, he admitted to himself for the first time that he had hated the hell out of her ever since he had known her. She had run Harry out of one marriage and into another with her. She understood, she had said. But it faded, of course, that understanding. She demanded more and more time from the great man (and he had had times of greatness, but America pretended not to see them, and Harry *wanted* America to acknowledge his greatness. But America had said in essence: *We may study you in freshman English anthologies, and if we ever arrive at the point where we show our fear or admit that we are guilty and ignore that guilt, we will study you first, Harry Ames*). Charlotte had been a pain in the ass (Ho! Ho!). Always when things were rough, she made a point of reminding Harry how much she had given up to marry him: family, friends, a whole culture. And Harry had always countered by saying, "Tough titty. You can go. I didn't want you because you're white. Go." But Charlotte never went. She stayed and sulked, and sulked even more when things were going well. She was, after all, a mediocre person when it came to dealing with the things Harry juggled with ease: history, politics, economics, people. Charlotte could only deal with herself. When had sulking turned to hatred?

Michelle. No, long before Michelle. Max looked at his watch again. He would call her. He placed the call and lay back. Great pills, absolutely fantastic pills. Margrit would be coming soon, too. Not too soon. She would give him a chance to rest

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a little. Damn her anyway. When the phone rang he said, "Max. Michelle?"

"Yes. How is Margrit?"

God*damn* these women, he thought. "All right. We are having dinner in a little while. Listen," he said speaking carefully, "I have not been well. It is nothing serious. But did I imagine that you were signaling me at the funeral?"

"Yes, I would see you. It is most urgent. It is about Harry."

Max mashed out his cigarette.

"It is about Harry," she said again.

"What, what about Harry?" Then he said, "Edwards?"

"Tomorrow by express, I will come to Rotterdam. From there the other train to Leiden. Will you meet me?"

"What address?"

She gave him the address and quickly rang off. Max lay back once more and closed his eyes. What in the hell was going on? Why didn't he leave well enough alone. Harry wasn't going to revert to flesh and blood. Charlotte. I bet she enjoyed thinking about him cooking and curling behind that wall. Got her kicks every stinking minute it took.

Margrit. Even if he wanted Margrit back he couldn't have her. Maybe it was good it went the way it did. He would have hated to have her around now, twenty-four hours a day, shuttling between the house and the hospital doing with a smile the tasks that every nurse he'd had frowned at.

He had dressed and was dozing on the bed when Margrit called from the lobby. He felt better and smiled as he straightened his tie. The old Margrit would have walked briskly through the lobby, taken the lift and come up to the room and talked while he dressed. And he would not have dressed until afterward.

He took a deep breath, patted his things into place and went downstairs. She had said she would be at the table. "What table?" he had almost asked, but he remembered in time. *The* table, of course.

She smiled up at him. "You got your bag all right, I see."

"Sure," he said, sliding over the seat to the window side. What was she talking about? Of course he had his bag. Then he remembered. When had he slept? When he woke he went directly to his bag, opened it, took out a fresh shirt and underwear. He hadn't even remembered that when he entered the room he had been without his bag. Jesus, he thought, Jesus Christ. "Drink?" he said.

"Yes, of course."

He smiled and looked across the street at the side entrances of the Stads Schouwburg and thought once again that Amsterdam was the one city he could have lived in other than New York. Idly he watched a Surinamer saunter down the street, past their window. Traffic was much thinner now, not so many bicycles, not so many cars; there were many people walking. "It remains constant, doesn't it?"

Margrit turned to the window—she had been looking at him. "The same, you mean? Yes, nearly so."

"Fantastic place." He marveled as they sipped their drinks, how in Amsterdam, except when you headed a little south, all that was new had been built around the old, had not overwhelmed the narrow, steeply gabled houses, nor the canals. Suddenly, he wished he were younger and starting all over again.

"What is the matter, Mox?"

"Nothing, Margrit. Hi. It's good to see you again. Why haven't you married some lucky Dutchman?"

"I haven't been waiting for you," she said.

"I didn't want you to. I didn't think you would."

"And you, Mox, who do you see now?"

"I'm kind of a fugitive."

"Fugi—"

"I'm not seeing anyone."

"Oh. Oh, I don't believe that, Mox."

He laughed. The pill and the liquor were making him high very fast. "I didn't think you would, but it is the truth."

She snorted. "You have had an amputation then."

"Yes." He glanced around the huge dining room. The tables and chairs were a rich, warm brown, the white tablecloths crisp and stiff. An elderly man was sitting at the reading table, poring over the papers from the racks.

"You are with the same magazine, Mox?"

He looked up quickly. He had forgotten that too. "No," he said.

"What are you doing?"

He looked at her with exasperation, then remembered that she wasn't his wife anymore, and that he had no right to be exasperated with her. But she had seen the look. "Or shouldn't I ask?"

"I've taken a leave," he said. "Tired."

"Yes," she said, turning once again to the window, her hair trailing a soft gold, "you were always tired, Mox."

Max signaled the waiter for more drinks. He supposed he was always tired. Bored, that's what brought it on, bored with all of it, the predictability of wars, the behavior of statesmen, cabdrivers, most men, most women. Bored because writing books had become, finally, unexciting; bored because The Magazine too, and all the people connected with it, did their work and lived by formulae. He was bored with New Deals and Square Deals and New Frontiers and Great Societies; suspicious of the future, untrusting of the past. He was sure of one thing: that he was; that he existed. The pain in his ass told him so.

"I guess I was always tired. Tired when I was born, maybe."

"That's what you always said."

"See? Nothing new. How's Roger?"

"Roger? Roger is still Roger, what else?"

"Still macking in his own intellectual way?"

"Still what—?"

"Macking. Macking. Oh, Margrit, you know what macking is."

"But no, I don't."

"We talked about it," he insisted. Shut your mouth, he told himself.

"No, we didn't."

"Okay, okay. Roger's still the same, that means he's macking."

"Have it your way."

"Thanks."

ROGER WAS NOT an ordinary macker; he gave a little more than most Negroes in Europe who were thus engaged between books or articles or showings or jazz engagements. Roger gave his women laughs and peeks at Kafka, Mann, Wright, Jami of Samarkand, the suppressed Books of Enoch; and he talked in ringing poetic tones of Wardell Grey, Bird, Pres; of Fats Navarro and the

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early Miles, and then, shifting pace, breaking it down into a long, smooth lope, he would go into Kant, Kierkegaard, Spinoza and Walter Van Tilburg Clark's philosophical handling of *The Ox-bow Incident;* he studied Hausa and Swahili and planned to get into Yoruba, Ga and Ibo—oh, Max remembered, Roger macked with finesse. After all this, *then* he would get the money from a Parisienne, a stacked female Swede or Dane or Hollander, and for dessert, he would climb aboard, down periscope and sail that sub. Roger worked at macking. He gave something Mack the Knife never had time for.

They ordered dinner. It was after nine and the night was descending slowly. Midway through, she said, "Do you want to see him?"

"See who?"

"Roger." She hated it when he was this way, his mind slipping from one thing to another so quickly that she could never follow it. She had noticed that he had ordered chopped sirloin well done, the vegetables well cooked and creamed potatoes. Not unusual, only the way he kept jabbing his fork into the food to see just how well done it was.

"Yes. And tell me, do you know a guy, Negro, named Alfonse Edwards?"

"Sure."

Max's gorge rose. What does *that* mean, he asked silently, *Sure*.

"What's his hype now? I mean is he really writing, or has he become a painter or a sculptor or a tourist?"

Margrit was on her third drink and she broke into laughter. "Tourist," she echoed. "Tourist."

"Yeh, so what's he really do?" You can get out of New York, Max thought, but you couldn't get New York out of you; you felt better knowing where a guy's pigeonhole is.

"I tell you they say he is a writer."

Max sagged in his seat then. For a moment he was feeling so good that he wondered if the doctor wasn't wrong. Then he remembered the long session in the doctor's office after the first biopsy. That long session while Margrit was working happily in the gallery in New York. Anyway, he felt good. But they were talking of Edwards. What in the world would he be doing in Holland? Writing? Who, Edwards? He hadn't talked to him about writing in Paris. Why not? When Harry was too busy to talk writing, they turned to him—Max. The younger fellows remembered that once Max had been considered better than Harry, a fact that made Harry sullen for over two years. They turned to Max when Harry was addressing the various Pan-African conferences or busy at something else. *That* was one of the odd things: Edwards had not in any way explained himself lately. A hipster would, somehow, with a casual turn of phrase, a word, a couple of words dropped here or there, let you pick up the pieces and complete your puzzle. A hipster knew how to play the game. No one came up to you and said, My name is Rinky-Dink and I'm a landscape artist. Anybody hip, they dropped signals and you got them. Most of the world went that way.

"What's he written?"

"They say he's working on a couple of novels, and he does articles."

Okay, he thought. Edwards a writer? I know what he *was*, but is he now? Max went on thinking. No, with his background he isn't just sitting around Europe starving between books and articles waiting for race riots to break out in the States so he can interpret them for the European press. How long until the next race riot? Edwards in Nigeria, Edwards in Europe.

Dessert, coffee and cognac, and then Margrit asked, pushing back the silence that had fallen, "What is the matter, Mox? Won't you tell me?"

He glanced up, tempted to ask her to go with him tomorrow to meet Michelle in case it became too hard for him. They'd gotten along well, the two of them. But then he thought, to hell with her. I'll go alone. He'd rent a car, it would be better than a train. He could stop and pull over and lie down if he had to. He could change the cotton if it felt too messy. It would be awkward on a train—he remembered the trip from Paris—and worse on a bus. "I told you," he said. "I'm tired."

"There is more than that this time. You won't tell me?"

"No."

"Is it bad?"

"Maggie, it was bad when I was born."

"You mean born black?"

"If you choose."

Margrit said, "Somehow, this conversation sounds like so many we had when we were together."

Max laughed and took her hand. "It does, doesn't it? Ah, Margrit. It's all a bit too much for old Max. Tell me now about Edwards. Does he come up here often? Has Roger cleared him of being a U.S. government fink? Roger has a nose for that, you know. And Edwards did work for the government in Nigeria."

"They all say he does not work for your government anymore, but they don't like him. He starts trouble. He picks fights for nothing. No one likes him. The tables become quiet on the Leidseplein when he is in town. I don't know who his friends are. Roger talks to him sometimes."

"Did he ever talk about Harry Ames?"

"Not to me, and I don't know anyone who ever mentioned his talking about Harry. What is it, Mox? What is going on?"

He said, "I don't know," and looked down at her hand. White, beginning to wrinkle, the wedding band on the right hand. He looked at the hand and pressed it. He too was wondering what was going on.

Max and Margrit were walking now along the Singel. His pace was slow and Margrit had slowed to match it. There were no flowers out that time of night. He was tiring and he had to get up early, but now they were going to see Roger. The pain was coming again in long, stomach-turning spasms.

"We'll take a cab back from Roger's," Max threw in. He watched Margrit nod. "Isn't your boyfriend going to be a little upset with you tonight?"

"Yes," she said, "he is, but he will understand."

"Oh, yeah," he said, thinking to himself with humor, you bitch, Margrit.

[3]

AMSTERDAM

When Roger Wilkinson opened his door, to Max Reddick he was the picture of the writer as a failure. Max pushed Margrit forward into a dingy flat, and he shook hands with Roger who seemed both surprised and embarrassed by the unannounced visit.

But Roger broke into a smile and said, "Sit down, you

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folks, if you can find a chair. You lookin' pretty tired, Max. You been down to Paris? For the funeral? Yeah?" He was rustling through some bottles. "Ain't got much here. A little beer, some Genever." Roger smiled through his reddish beard. "How'd you find me? You see I've moved." He'd always left his places of residence a mystery. "I'm into my thing," he would explain, and vanish, and in Europe, the black artists went along with your wish to be left alone, most of the time. Until you started to make it, then they came back to bug you back into failure. "You should have let me know you were coming," Roger said.

"Ah, well," Max said, accepting a beer. "What's new?"

Roger cleared his throat loudly and glanced around the room. "You know, man, the same old thing. Trying to make it, you know."

Max nodded. Roger had been in Europe a long time. He had written three novels, which he had been unable to sell. Roger was wound up in himself, Max had concluded. Roger for Roger.

"Articles?" Max asked. Roger was one of those writers who, whenever race riots broke out back home, was summoned hastily by the local magazine or newspaper editors to explain what was going on. "*Le célèbre écrivain noir américain Roger Wilkinson explique pourquoi les noirs des Etats Unis . . .*" With a photo of Roger bearded and pensive, *artistic*, surveying the accompanying three-column picture of rioters.

"Well, they keep me in bread. But here in Holland, man, getting money out of Hans Brinker is like forcing your way into Fort Knox. They tight with the change, man. Tight."

"Yeah-yeah," Max said. He had known Roger back in the States. Then Roger had come to Europe. To be free. He'd returned to New York briefly, then back to Europe for good. He knew all the European capitals, having lived in them at one time or another, until he settled in Amsterdam. He would have preferred Scandinavia; the women were the most handsome in Europe. But it was too cold.

"Listen," Max said. "I'm not in town for long. Just came up to see Margrit. Have to get back home."

"You're not going to stay a while, Max? What a drag, man. Really."

"Yeah. Do you know Alfonse Edwards?"

Roger feigned drawing away from an unwholesome object. "*That* cat! Well, yes and well, no. I mean I'm not up tight with him; no one is. I see him around when he's in town. That's about all."

"Do you know where he's staying?"

"I hear he's in a hotel. What's happening, Max?"

"I don't know. Margrit tells me he's writing."

Roger drew a dirty fingernail through his beard. His hair was very thick, but no one would mistake him for an African; his complexion was too light. "I *guess* he writes. I've *heard* that he writes. He loads up a car with articles and drives around Europe selling them to papers and magazines. You know, crap all *pre*pared, and about half of it plagiarized. I mean, these people over here just don't know."

"Does he make it, like that?"

"He must. Always wearing some boss shit and got some fine fox on his arm. He *must* be making it."

"Yeah," Max said.

"—and he eats very well," Roger added.

"Is he a fink?"

"A fink. No, man, he's just got his hype going and it's working. If the government planted a fink, wouldn't they make him to be one of the boys, you know, not sharp, an artist, starving, trying to get all the pussy he can. Now, Edwards, he's just a little bit away from everybody. Uncle Sam don't work that way. In the middle, right in the middle."

Margrit was watching Max. What is the matter with him, she wondered. The hand with which he was holding the beer glass trembled suddenly, and Max casually lowered it to the table. But Margrit had seen it. She wished she could be glad he was ill, but she could not; she had got over the past and had even been pleased to see him again. She never thought she would be. She was still attracted to him; the mystery that seemed to be him when they first met to a substantial extent was still there. Perhaps in a way the reason for that *was* because of that big, ponderously walking Negro who led a column of liberating black Americans through the streets of Groningen. Groningen was a city you left just as soon as you realized that the people in it were more German than Dutch. He had walked, Margrit remembered, with a wide step, and there was a grin on his face and chocolate bars were sticking out from his pockets. She had broken loose from her parents and from a group of other small children who waved the tiny American flags their parents had kept hidden, and had raced into the street. The big black man picked her up and laughed, gave her candy and put her down again. Max had said, once when she talked about that day, "Well, the world starts whirling for different people for different reasons and at different times. I'll thank that guy if I ever see him."

"More beer?" Roger asked. "Man, I'm really sorry I didn't know you were coming. We coulda turned one on."

"Your first book, we'll turn one on. You'll be coming home then, I guess?"

"Yeah, I guess it would be time then."

Max thought back to when he had ever thought to quit writing. All the time. Roger never thought about it and should have quit a long time ago. After a while, Max thought, all the talk of writing, all the advice, is nothing if you haven't got it yourself. With Harry, they seldom talked about writing or even other writers. That was mostly because they were always talking about women or The Problem at home. It was also because Harry was secretive with his French and British and American writer friends if they were the good ones. Max never knew just who they were; they would show up at a party and by the way Harry talked with them, Max would know that they had been friends for a long time. Harry didn't really like to share things. Like Roger, still looking very young, but starting to age in a strange, distant sort of way, didn't like to share himself either. And chances were, Max mused, that Roger did have a bottle tucked back somewhere, for a very special piece of ass that he had to impress. He didn't bring the bottle out because he had to have his revenge for the invasion of his privacy. In that privacy, Max knew, he was picking dried snot out of his nose, rubbing it into his pants and thinking hard thoughts on a world that refused to read his works. Mostly, he was feeling sorry for himself, whether as a Negro or a writer, Max didn't know. As a Negro, he hadn't suffered, hadn't armied in the South, hadn't been hungry and he had never gone south of Manhattan. Roger's Negro anger was ersatz; ersatz, but useful. If he hadn't been Negro, he would have had no reason on earth to raise his voice, or to want to write.

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"Listen," Roger was saying. "Shall we look for Edwards' hotel?"

Max spun the glass between his thumb and forefinger. "Maybe tomorrow."

"But I thought you were leaving, like, *zap*!"

"I have to take care of a few things first. Tomorrow morning I've got something to do and then we'll see."

"Where you staying?" Roger asked.

"The American," Max said, rising, catching pain midway up, but shuffling in his step so they wouldn't see.

"That's boss," Roger said. His smile was twisted. "One of these days, baby, one of these days."

"Got to stay with it," Max mumbled.

"See you tomorrow? We can have a taste on the Plein. I'll stop by the hotel, okay?"

"Well, yeh, okay, maybe late in the afternoon." Max started through the door after Margrit.

They walked to the cabs parked beneath the trees. They were just down the street from the Anne Frank House, and that part of Amsterdam always did strange things to him; it made him sad and it made him angry. It also made him aware of what so easily could be at home.

"Mox, why are you so thin?"

The cab rolled easily over the cobblestones; it passed the couples lingering over the edges of the canals. Max suddenly felt frightened. There would be a billion other nights in Amsterdam as soft as this one, filled with the odor of sea and old bricks and tarred wood pilings; and there would be the smell of food, drifting gently down upon the street from those Vermeer kitchens; there would be young men and young women, unjaded as yet, talking about loving one another.

I don't want to miss it! Max thought, I don't want to miss any of it! I want to live forever and ever and ever and ever . . .

They were at her house now. The cab had stopped. Margrit got out. For a second she waited, then she knew that Max was going on to the hotel. She spoke to the driver in Dutch. "I will see you tomorrow?"

"In the afternoon, Maggie. Shall I meet you in the hotel?"

"What is wrong with the morning?"

"You have to work."

"I would take it off."

"I have something to do. In Leiden."

"Do you want me to go with you?"

"Thanks, no. Business."

"Good night, Mox."

"Good night, Maggie."

She closed the door. "American," Max said, and slumped back in the seat, his eyes half closed. The driver nodded. "She telled," he said.

"Okay," Max said. "Fine."

[4]

AMSTERDAM

TREMBLING, MAX REACHED for a cigarette. He touched his behind and found the cotton wet. He had taken the precaution of sleeping on a towel. He moved and pain lanced through him and it was heavy and dull and he knew it would stay with him this time unless he took the morphine. He rose, changed the cotton and took the drug. It was still dark outside. He looked at the syringe. If he could just avoid steady use of the morphine for the next few days, just a few more. He started to nod. Suddenly there was a sharp pain in his hand and he jerked it up to find that the cigarette had burned down to his fingers. If he'd had a filter-tip cigarette, it wouldn't have burned him. He placed the cigarette in the ashtray. He didn't have strength enough to crush it out. Then he went to sleep wrapped in a morphinated stupor.

But by the time his morning call came, he felt better. He couldn't feel the pain anymore and the morphine had not left him too drowsy. He called down for a breakfast he didn't want, then showered. The sun was already bright on the Leidseplein. It made him feel good. He wondered what Margrit was doing, if she were already on her way to work. He should have kissed her last night, on the cheek, the forehead, some damned where. It had been good to see her. It would be good to see her later, when he returned from Leiden. His breakfast *of soft foods came, and he picked over it. Then he called to* make arrangements for the car. He was shaken by his toilet and he took one of his pills and lay on the bed, a routine prescribed by Dr. Woodson.

He could hear the city waking. The trams rattled around the curve downstairs, bells clanging. The horns of the cars grew in number and volume. He knew the bicycle riders were flowing past too. The hotel was fully awake now; he could hear doors being closed, maids walking heavily up and down the carpeted halls, the harsh sounds of Dutch being spoken in semi-whispers. And there was the rattle of breakfast dishes being removed from the rooms. Soon, Max knew, the chambermaids would be at his door. He dozed again. Another half hour, he told himself.

As he got into the VW (there had been nothing else available) he had another of those periods when he felt good, impossibly good, so much like his old self. Once again he permitted himself to think that the cotton, the pills, the pain, the morphine, Dr. Woodson were a hideous comedy of errors. Even now, he thought, some obscure lab technician might be on the phone talking to the doctor, saying there had been a mistake. Max shook himself out of the daydream and started the car. Take what you get, man. It's nice, enjoy it. You knew as soon as you could know things that you weren't going to live forever. You got twenty extra years. Remember the war. The tanks. Cinquale Canal. Viareggio. The mountains. The Ghoums. The donkeys. He drove slowly through the streets. They did not look familiar. That is, they did not look *unfamiliar;* they looked, each one, just like one he had passed. He felt his way and was pleased when he arrived at the road south, Europa 10.

A fine silver mist hung low over the level, neat green fields. You could say that for the Netherlands; their neatness was blatant, as blatant as New York's high risers. Going back toward the city were two highway policemen with their helmets and sunglasses and white shoulder belts. They roared along in a Porsche. Max settled back in the seat. It was a nice day. Why was he messing it up with Harry Ames, now dead and gone, sprinkled somewhere over the Seine? Once he and Harry had planned to drive through Holland, but like so many things they'd talked about doing, it hadn't come off. But there had been other things, a hundred thousand other things, he thought, driving along at a steady clip under a rapidly warming sun . . .

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[5]

LEIDEN

"LEIDEN" THE SIGN SAID. Another half mile and Max peeled off the main road, shifted into third and moved slowly through the streets. Once he stopped to look at his directions, then drove on to the train station; the street he was looking for was near it. Twice he missed it and had to double back on one-way streets. The third time he hit it just right, drove past a weather-beaten wooden windmill (left up for the tourists) and went down the street until he came to the number Michelle Bouilloux had given him. There was a wall around the house. Max got out of the car and stretched. The first thing he'd do was go to the bathroom; the cotton felt wet. He glanced at the sun; it was directly overhead. Noon, or just about; it shouldn't have taken him that long to drive down here. He'd do better going back, he thought.

Max rang the bell. He breathed the scents of spring, the water in the canals, the fresh blooming trees, the noontime cooking and, faintly, the exhaust fumes of cars. He heard the lock on the garden door snap open and he pushed at the ancient, browned slab of wood. In the garden, color rose layer above layer. First was the thick carpet of grass divided by a walk, then fern bushes and daffodils, then red and pink roses, all dwarfed by giant spreading oaks on either side. He almost missed seeing the house behind the flowers and plants, but he started down the walk, closing the door behind him. Up ahead, at the other end of the walk, the door of the old stone house opened, and Michelle Bouilloux rushed out, her red hair glinting copper as she ran toward him through the different levels of color. Max perceived her dimly, rushing out of the past as it were, and heard her shoes slapping ever so gently upon the old slate walk, and for the first time he smelled the flowers themselves.

The black she wore this time was not so formal; it allowed her form to show and beneath her simply cut dress her breasts heaved up and down with each crimping little stride she took toward him. He thought with surprise, she's a redhead! Of course, she was a redhead. He'd known that once. Why had he forgotten? It was just the day, the time of day, that hour in life through which all past thoughts and desires filtered once more. As she came closer to him, her ripe, reluctantly aging body still—(how would he say it?) *succulent; un repas succulent*—he noticed that she fixed his face with her eyes in such a searchingly bright manner that he inwardly recoiled, not from her, but from what it was she saw. "Hey, Michelle, *ça va, chérie, umm, très chic toujours, ah?*" Only by bracing himself was he able to take her crashing embrace without falling. It was his own fault. He had thrown open his arms and thrust himself forward in a feeble attempt to recapture the greetings of old. They kissed and hugged and kissed again, until she drew back and let her eyes go over his face again. "Max, *es-tu malade?*"

"What?"

"I'm sorry. Are you sick, Max? I noticed in Paris that you did not look well. Now you are here—Max—you look worse. Come, I will fix you a coffee." She took his arm and they walked to the house.

As soon as they entered Max said, "Michelle, I must use your bath."

"But of course, Max."

When he came out the coffee was ready along with neat little open-faced sandwiches. "You are hungry, Max?" Michelle asked.

He nodded. As she poured the coffee, he leaned to look out the window. A canal flowed right next to the house. He guessed it was a pretty cold place during the winter. The house was very old and extremely Dutch in style. "Is this your house, Michelle?"

"Yes." She passed him his coffee. "Way in the back," she said, "in history, one of my relatives was a soldier with Napoleon. Coming back from Waterloo, he simply stayed and took a Dutch wife. They built this and used it from time to time when they were not in France. But," she added hastily, "we are far more French than Dutch."

As he was sipping his coffee, Max felt an urge to turn; it was as if someone was looking at him. He looked up at a photograph of Harry Ames standing in a far corner on the mantle of the fireplace. Max turned and looked at Michelle, then back at the photo. It was Harry's devilish photo. His eyes danced and his brows were arched like mountain peaks.

"My husband never knew of this house," Michelle said with a little smile. "It belongs after all to *my* family."

"So this is where you and Harry used to vanish to."

"Yes." She sat back in her chair and crossed one leg with a flash of white. "But, how have you been, Max? Are you still with the magazine? No more novels, Max? What happened? And Margrit, you saw her in Amsterdam. Is she well? Is there any hope for you two or is there someone else?"

Max shrugged. "There's no one else. Margrit? She's fine. The magazine? [What had he told Margrit? That he had quit three months ago or—No] I took a leave for a little while. I was getting tired, Michelle. Too much traveling, too many different countries and people and things in too short a time. Not like the old days, they say, before the jets. Just tired, honey."

"We always hoped you would come back to Paris and settle down to live, Max. So much was missing when you decided to return to America. Harry felt badly about it. You made him feel that he might be wrong. It was not a good feeling for him to have. Harry was not a good man to know when he was uncertain about things; he thrashed about and he hurt people. And your swift passings through were never enough."

"Well . . ." Max let his voice fall off. Tired, he thought, damned tired.

"I often had the feeling," Michelle was saying, "that there were certain important things America could do or say in some fashion, and they would have been enough to send Harry rushing back to New York. America never said or did them. All day I've been thinking: maybe he wasn't happy in France after the first few years. Maybe he wasn't."

Max said, "He never wrote about the French; he never wrote about France, nothing in love, hate, anger or even indifference. Maybe he was wrong."

"His heart did lay in America, and one could always find time to reflect on that and be sorry—"

"Michelle," Max said, breaking in more sharply than he intended, because he was feeling a sudden lurch of pain even through the morphine. Anticipating it after the morning's drive, he had increased his dosage in her bathroom. "Why are we here?" Michelle closed her mouth slowly and firmly. Ah, he is not well, she thought; that explains it. That must

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explain it. She glanced out the window. Max saw her in full profile. His eyes went down to her chest where her breasts swelled to bursting against her dress, then mercifully sloped back to her stomach. He was now conscious of her perfume, a faint something. Violet? Michelle uncrossed her leg and crossed the other. She leaned forward and took a sandwich and glanced at the window again as she took a bite. Max waited, staring at the dark waters of the canal. Why didn't she get on with it?

"I have something to give to you." She took another bite of her sandwich. Max, warm in the stupor he felt himself tumbling into, watched her open her small, rounded mouth. No lipstick. Fluttering like a newborn snake, his penis strained toward an erection. Max groaned and clutched his coffee, wincing. Michelle frowned. Her pout vanished and she came forward, setting her cup on the small table that stood between them. She touched his knee. He placed a hand over her hand and with the other wiped the stinging tears from his eyes. She looked up at him quizzically. "What, dear Max. Tell me. You are ill. O! Max!" Her own eyes filled suddenly with tears. "We are *all* getting old and sick and dropping dead, with everything still a mess."

"Michelle," Max said, trying to laugh lightly. "I never made love to a woman with red hair. Never in my entire life."

Michelle laughed a little through her tears. "Why, what an extraordinary thing to say!" She giggled. "Max, why do you say that?"

Max leaned forward now, spinning rapidly somewhere between a wild high and stupor. "Would you let me make love to you if I were going to die and could complete that act just once before I did?" Max smiled at her.

Michelle smiled back. "But we are both so old—I would not like the responsibility of having your death on my hands, dear Max—"

"I would do it for you, Michelle."

"You would?" Michelle frowned and smiled by turn. What a strange conversation. How odd, how odd! She stood and retrieved her coffee and then coquettishly said, "I might consider it. But enough of this game, Max. It frightens me." She wiped the edges of her eyes with a tiny lace handkerchief.

"Michelle," Max said, feeling some of the tension ease from his body, "the mess was a long time in the making; it'll take a long time in the cleaning. Harry thought he could do it all. Now tell me what Harry left."

She went to a nearby cabinet and opened it and pulled out a worn leather briefcase. From her purse she took a key. She laid these on a sideboard. "I will have a whiskey," she said. "This is all too depressing, to talk of love and death in the same breath. You, a whiskey?"

Max felt his head going forward and in a panic he jerked it back up. It took him the greater part of a second to focus and see if Michelle had been watching him. No. "Yes, I'll have one," he said. How many times had he seen junkies and cops standing within three feet of each other on Eighth Avenue and 125th Street, the junkies nodding just as he'd started to, and the cops pretending not to see.

"Water," she said, "or soda?"

"Plain."

First she brought the whiskey and then the briefcase. She laid the key gently in his hand. "You rather than Charlotte, Michelle?"

"Yes, of course. Yes."

"Almost from the first, wasn't it?" Max remembered the letters: . . . *and man, there is this French chick, with red hair! (You had one yet!) I've never known a woman like her . . .*

Michelle smiled shyly. "Yes, almost from the start." She looked into her whiskey glass. "You should have seen him *then*!" she cried fiercely, and Max saw that she was sobbing once more. Her voice began to wash back and forth over Max. Her gestures with her hands (whiskey splashing in light brown arcs) were like frightened little birds springing in a hundred different directions. Her face lighted up. She tossed her head. "He was like a breath of fresh air when he came, like the first strong smell of spring skipping along the Boulevard St. Michel. His eyes were big with seeing, and his heart, oh, Max his heart! It was big enough to catapult this world to the moon and farther! We thought him the first true American existentialist, and I will never forget what he said at a party: 'Existentialist? what is that?' Of course, he was kidding. But two of his books, I forget which ones, made us see America through eyes we'd not used before.

"He was very much in demand. He went to many parties and came to know Jean-Paul—he had just published the second book of his *Les Chemins de la Liberté*—Simone, Albert, Jean, Françoise, André." Michelle laughed, throwing up her feet. "And at one party he met your American star, the eh, eh, the bullfight man? Yes, of course you know who I mean, but Harry would not talk to him, said, 'No American writer can be called great unless he deals with American themes, problems and aspirations. That man could write about losers so well and not even really know any; he went here and there to find them and all the time they were right beneath his feet. Millions of them.' We needed that then, with the war not long over and Dienbienphu with us—André had just returned from a tour there—we needed the confidence of someone who had taken more of a beating than we, generations and generations of beatings, and who could still see *le chemin de la liberté*. So Harry was not a good existentialist and sometimes we think Jean-Paul, beneath it all, is not either. Yes, France rolled out the red carpet as you Americans say, and I met Harry at one of those parties. My husband, you remember, was quite close to the Ministry of Culture. I saw Harry's wife then and many times after. She seemed—petulant, that so many people were concerned for her husband's work and concerned for *him*. I could tell right away she was not very good for him. What do you do to writers in America?"

Michelle had had two more drinks by now, Max noticed through the soft, cottony gray cloud that waited to envelop him. Concentrate, he told himself, but he also told himself that perhaps a nap would do him good. It was still early; he would get back to Amsterdam in good time. Perhaps Michelle would even drive him there and take the train back. *Do something!* Open the case. Pandora's box, maybe. He thought he was laughing. Pandora's *box*. Were those Greeks clever! Talking all that hip Harlem trash for centuries. Pandora's *box*. Yes, indeed. How did it go: "For Pandora carried a box which she was forbidden to open; it would bring misfortune to man." Wow, Michelle, let me open your box.

". . . Max! You're not drinking!" Michelle reached for his glass and he slipped his hand over her wrist. Brown and white, he thought. Nice. She took the glass. "I'll get you another and together we'll drink one to Harry."

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"No, Michelle," he said. He tried to rise, but gave it up and crashed softly back in his chair. The cottony gray fog now swept over him in thick, choking gusts. "No more Michelle." He fingered the key to the case. It slid through his fingers as though it had been coated with graphite. He wanted to get a firm grip on it and he wanted to scratch himself at the same time. The nodding and the scratching—well, he knew what that was.

Hours passed, it seemed, time telescoping as if it had resigned itself to the play of mirrors. Michelle was still standing motionless, the glasses of whiskey still in her hands. Max blinked. The attaché case on his legs suddenly became unbearably heavy and his knees began to quiver. The cold sweat was back, popping out on his forehead. He thought he smiled at Michelle. Finally, he thought he was putting the key in his pocket. "Michelle," he seemed to be saying from some distance away. He cleared his throat and spoke louder. "Michelle, I must lay down for a little while."

"Max, what is it?" She did things before she came to him. Putting the glasses down? "What is wrong? Of course you can lay down. I did not notice until now, I was so busy thinking of myself with Harry. But come."

Max leaned on her when he finally got to his feet. He leaned on her and felt her breasts pressing into his chest. With an unsteady hand he touched one, slipped his hand around on it until he felt the nipple.

"Stop. Be a good boy, Max. Give me the case to carry."

"I can carry it."

They struggled up the stairs. "I hope this doesn't disturb any plans you might have made."

"No, no, it is quite all right. Shall I get a doctor?"

"No, Michelle. I know what is wrong."

They were near the top of the stairs now. "What?" Michelle asked, gently pushing aside the hand that sought her breasts in slow motion. They paused, breathing heavily. Max took his hand from her breast and tilted her chin to his mouth and clumsily kissed her. "What is wrong with me is what is wrong with all of us. I'm simply dying. Like you. Like everyone."

"Shhh," she said, helping him into the bedroom, to the bed and then removing his shoes. "Why do you make such jokes, Max? You do worry me. Another kiss, Max? Oh, Max, should we get so? A little one, Max, no more."

Max was being washed up in it, the unzipping of her blouse, the mute struggle to unclasp the brassiere, the wide, heavy-tongued kisses and finally, the stark, white, fat breasts tumbled out and hung formlessly before him. Michelle had remained motionless, as if sensing that this was something he must do, and he sensed that and stopped. Yes, he had wanted a redhead. Tenderly, he placed her breasts back inside her blouse. He heard a long dry stroking somewhere. He listened very carefully and heard sparrows in the yard downstairs. Then he knew what the sound was, the rubbing of a giant limb against the house. Breathing deeply and not looking at him, Michelle raised herself from the bed. "It is not much good without the love, Max, is it? After a while, the clichés have meaning once again."

"Yes, Michelle." Pain had been riding hard between Max's buttocks, now it was subsiding. Max started to fall between the gray clouds as Michelle's voice came distantly to him. "There is an awful smell, Max. Do you smell it? Could a small animal from the garden be caught in the eaves and rotting? Max, do you think so?" She snapped her brassiere and zipped up her blouse.

"I don't know," Max whispered.

She leaned over and kissed his cheek. "Sleep, Max." Then she went out, closing the door behind her softly. He heard her going slowly down the stairs. The smell, the cancer smell of rot and death. Sort of sweet, sort of heavy, sort of like being near a corpse on a battlefield and not even seeing it. The senses, like those of a beast, remember the smell of death. Max winced in pain and fear. Now he was just like anyone else. Mortal. Stinkingly mortal. Until Michelle had spoken he had pretended that the smell was not his.

[6]

LEIDEN

BAM! MAX JUMPED IN THE BED, his mouth agape, his hands held protectively in front of him. Slowly, the bedroom in Leiden came back into focus. Max lowered his hands. What in the hell is scaring me besides the cancer? That I know about. It's something I don't know. He looked at the floor where Harry's briefcase had fallen and its brass fittings had clattered on the oaken floor.

"Max! Max!"

He heard Michelle racing up the steps. She burst through the door, her eyes sweeping the room in fright. "Are you all right? I heard something fall."

Max pointed to the briefcase. She said, "Oh, I was frightened. Haven't you started on the papers yet?"

"No, I've been drowsing. I'll get to them in a minute."

"If you need me," Michelle said, "just call." There was something in her eyes Max saw, something familiar, knowing. "Max," Michelle said. She had been about to close the door.

"Yes."

She simply stared at him, pityingly.

"Yes," he repeated.

"It is nothing." She closed the door gently, almost reverently, as if someone were dead in the room. She knows, Max thought. She's thought about the smell. Max retrieved the briefcase from the floor and unlocked it. He took out a yellowing envelope addressed to Harry in Paris. He took the letter from the envelope and scanned it, then paused at the signature. Theodore Dallas. Max knew Dallas; he had been with the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. A blond Negro with blue eyes, a Democrat who managed to secure some important positions. The letter was dated two years ago. Max read and reread the letter. It seemed friendly. He set the letter aside, then removed the contents from the case and saw that the packets were numbered. He removed the packet numbered "1." In the distance he heard a train rushing toward the station he had passed trying to find Michelle's house. Max placed a pillow beneath his buttocks to ease the throbbing pain and opened the packet.

Dear Max:

You are there, Max? It is you reading this, right? I mean, even dead, which I must be for you to have these papers *and* be alone in the company of Michelle, I'd feel like a damned fool if someone else was reading them. I hope these lines find you in good shape and with a full life behind you, because, chances are, now that you've started reading, all that is way, way behind you, baby.

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Max blinked and reread the lines. What was this? It was like listening to Harry talk once more, perhaps in Paris in the cafe, or in his house, in his study, with Charlotte and the kids in the other room, and he, Max, tingling from feeling good, just being in Europe.

God, Max, what doesn't start with Africa? What a history still to be told! The scientists are starting to say life began there. I'm no scientist. I don't know. But I do know that this letter you're reading had its origins with what happened there. Let me go back to the beginning. I doubt if you've heard of Alliance Blanc. In 1958 Guinea voted to leave the French Family of Nations, and at once formed a federation with Kwame Nkrumah, or Ghana, whichever you prefer. The British and French were shaken. How could countries only two minutes ago colonies spring to such political maturity? Would the new federation use pounds or francs? The national banks of both countries were heavily underwriting the banking systems of the two countries. There would be a temporary devaluation of both pounds and francs, whether the new federation minted new money or not. More important—and this is what really rocked Europe—if the federation worked, how many new, independent African states would follow suit? *Then*, what would happen to European interests in Africa after independence and federation? Was it *really* conceivable that all of Africa might one day unite, Cape to Cairo, Abidjan to Addis? Alliance Blanc said *Yes!* If there were a United States of Africa, a cohesiveness among the people—300,000,000 of them—should not Europeans anticipate the possibility of trouble, sometime when the population had tripled, for example? Couldn't Africa become another giant, like China, with even more hatred for the white West? It was pure guilt over what Europeans had done to Africa and the Africans that made them react in such a violent fashion to African independence.

The white man, as we well know, has never been of so single an accord as when maltreating black men. And he has had an amazing historical rapport in Africa, dividing it up arbitrarily across tribal and language boundaries. That rapport in plundering Africa never existed and never will when it requires the same passion for getting along with each other in Europe. But you know all this. All I'm trying to say is that, where the black man is concerned, the white man will bury the differences that have existed between them since the beginning of time, and come together. How goddamn different this would have been if there had been no Charles Martel at Tours in 732!

The Alliance first joined together not in the Hague, not in Geneva, not in London, Versailles or Washington, but in Munich, a city top-heavy with monuments and warped history. Present were representatives from France, Great Britain, Belgium, Portugal, Australia, Spain, Brazil, South Africa. The United States was also present. There were white observers from most of the African countries that appeared to be on their way to independence. The representation at first, with a few exceptions, was quasi-official. But you know very well that a quasi-official body can be just as effective as an official one: in fact, it is often better to use the former.

I don't have to tell you that the meetings, then and subsequently, were held in absolute secrecy. They were moved from place to place—Spain, Portugal, France, Brazil and in the United States, up around Saranac Lake—Dreiser's setting for *An American Tragedy*, that neck of the woods, remember? America, with the largest black population outside Africa, had the most need of mandatory secrecy.

Max couldn't concentrate; his thoughts kept flying off. He put Harry's letter on the bed and lit a cigarette. He glanced at the window. About one o'clock. He wondered what Michelle was doing downstairs. It seemed quiet. They shouldn't have had those drinks. In the old days, yes. Lunches in New York, seeming to fly down Madison Avenue after three martinis and two stingers. The old days when no one was ill, and liquor and cigarettes put a fine edge on any part of the day, even in the morning, if you found yourself with nothing to do. He remembered drinking warm beer at eight in the morning in Kano in northern Nigeria, when the temperature was already over 100 degrees. Max frowned. He was drifting again.

NEW YORK

THERE WERE A NUMBER OF CARS already parked near Zutkin's large, dark-shingled house. As he was parking, Max heard the slopping beat of boogie-woogie and a number of voices and, punctuating these, the soft, deceptive spit of a .22. Shots, he guessed, were being fired. As he approached the house, the music and voices began to come low and flat. Zutkin's house was near the ocean. Max circled the house, saw dancers moving to the music, but he wanted to look at the water. He knew people who cared nothing at all for oceans and lakes and streams, and he found that strange. He could not pass a body of water without looking at it and wondering how it was that he and the millions of others had started in places like that. He marveled at it.

A group of people were standing on the sandy ledge overlooking the ocean, clustered around a crouching, broad-shouldered Negro man who was firing a pump rifle. The man lowered the weapon, raised it again and sighted. About seventy-five feet away, down on the shelf of the beach, a can bounded in the air and fell back. The man (Ames! Max had thought) lowered the rifle and looked around triumphantly. His eyes had just locked with Max's when Zutkin approached.

"Hello, Max," Zutkin said, holding out a Scotch highball. "Saw you come in. How've you been? Glad you could come."

"Thanks, Bernard. I'm all right, thanks." His eyes swung back to Ames.

"I'm glad he's not angry with me," Zutkin said loudly.

"Don't count on it, man," Ames said, pulling out of his crouch. The people around him now turned to Zutkin and Max.

"Max Reddick," Zutkin said, and proceeded to introduce Max around. Now Max and Ames stood face to face. They were about the same height, Max noticed with satisfaction. Ames had big hands, but they weren't hard.

"Hello, brother," Ames said. "How's your shooting eye?" He turned back to the beach and fired at the can once more. They could hear sand spray with sharp tinny sounds from the near miss. Ames spun around and thrust the rifle straight up, to Max.

Max recognized the challenge. The people would be sympathetic if he missed. Even Ames. The comparison would be obvious. It might even carry to the writing of novels. "I'll give it a try," Max said, handing Ames his drink and taking the rifle. It had a bead sight and was light, almost too light, even for a .22.

"I'll bet he's like one of those guys who hang around the poolhalls and pretends he's a sucker can't shoot a lick, but he's really a hustler," Ames said.

"Exactly," Max said, as he aimed, and he knew that Ames had him at both ends; if he missed, well, Ames was a better shot and perhaps all the rest. If he didn't miss, well, he was a hustler, jiving them. Max stood at the lip of the ledge. He moved his elbows and glanced back at Ames. Ames had

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braced on one of his thighs. Max was showing him that he needed no brace. There was a flicker in Ames' eyes; he understood. A polite silence fell. Max took a breath, let it out part way and held it. He squeezed. The can jumped. He squeezed again. The can bounded in the opposite direction. A murmur ran through the onlookers. Not quite like shooting squirrel or rabbit in Wisconsin, just to show the old man that you could get something, Max thought, but it would do. He pumped and fired again and while the can was still in motion, drilled it twice. He pumped, sighted and the trigger snapped, flatly. Empty. Max was grinning when he turned and handed the gun back to Ames.

"Told you, didn't I?" Ames said, taking the rifle.

"Squirrels and rabbits," Max explained.

"And pigeons," Ames said sarcastically. He smiled. "I don't like nobody who can do things better than me. Ask Bernard. Hey, how's your drinking?"

"Tolerable," Max said, smiling.

"Tolerable? Where the hell you from?"

Max knew then that Ames hadn't read his book and he was disappointed. The dust jacket would have told Ames where he was from.

"Chicago—and Cleveland."

"Ah, now I see. Lots of Mississippi folks in Chicago."

"Yes, over on Indiana, Calumet . . ."

"But you said your drinking is tolerable, that means you got a hollow leg. We'll find out. Got all weekend, hey Bernard?"

"You won't need the whole weekend, Harry."

Right then, Max noticed the edge in Zutkin's voice, although the critic's smile told him that he hadn't meant to let it slip through. A sidelong glance at Ames told Max that he had made a mental note of it.

"Ease up, Bernard, I brought my own hooch."

With an excess of gesture and voice, Zutkin said, "Harry, you know you didn't have to do that."

The afternoon sun began its run toward Manhattan. Record followed record: Tommy Dorsey, Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, Earl Hines, Jimmy Lunceford, a new group, the Cats 'n the Fiddle. There was talk about the Germans, the Japanese plowing through China, the impending selective service peacetime act. Couples danced on the porch, in the house, in the yard. Some people had slid down to the shelf and were running toward the water, thermos jugs in hand. By now Max had met Charlotte, a rangy woman with long blond hair and full body. But everything she did was precise, and she had had many drinks. They seemed not to affect her at all. It finally dawned on Max that Charlotte was interested only in Ames. Ah, well, what the hell. And later he was still sitting on the ledge, looking at the changing colors of the sea. A redhead was talking to him. She wore a bathing suit. Her legs were very hairy. He could see her breasts bubbling at the top of the suit. "I just love you for that book," she said. "Jesus, it was great."

"Well, thanks," Max said. He turned up his glass, eyes rolling down once more to her legs. The glass was empty. He started to rise to get another drink.

"Let me get it for you," the redhead said, very close to him. "You're a celebrity."

With a show of embarrassed nonchalance, Max gave her the glass. What the hell was her name? Had she told him? He caught Ames' eye. Ames was lying with his head in Charlotte's lap. Ames winked and Max thought: this party is going to be groo-vy! His voice thick with insinuation, Ames drawled, "How are you doing, brother?"

"You tell me," Max said.

"Fine, fine, fine like wine, jack."

"But you the best," Max said.

"Man, I know it, just don't show it," Ames said, laughing.

"Streevus mone on the reevus cone," Max said, enjoying the poolhall, jitterbug, nonsensical word game, a game whose meaning was conveyed not by the words, because they had no meaning, but by the tone of voice, the inflection.

"Until sleptis joon cut out from the moon," Ames countered.

The redhead returned. Ames closed his eyes and said, "Weeby on the streeby and a did-dit-datty-dit."

"If it's not strong enough, I'll put more in," she said, sitting down on the sand again. "You're not high, are you?"

"High? I'm flying," Max said. What would this night bring, he thought, and really, with so little effort. He was going to like being a novelist; he was going to love the *hell* out of it.

"You don't look high," she said.

"No? Anyway, I got rhythm . . ."

"That's a damned silly thing to say," the redhead cried, getting up.

"Hey," Max called, seeing his night suddenly vanishing, "that was a joke, don't you . . ."

"There are some things," she said, "that you don't joke about."

Max stared at his glass, puzzled. He had the feeling that, although he was lying perfectly still, Ames had heard everything —and was laughing to himself.

The next day, after mumbling his apologies to Zutkin, Max prepared to leave. He was backing out when he heard a voice. He stopped. Harry Ames.

"Heard you were leaving. I think you're smart. Be independent in your own way. They'd love you to stay and pick up another chick, maybe one that hasn't heard that you have a sense of humor. I heard that crack about you got rhythm. I haven't read your book yet, Max. I'm sure it's good. Zutkin's no fool."

The music had started up again. There were voices already raised in tribute to the first round of drinks that day. Ames was leaning in the car window now. "There are in this business," he said, with a heavy air, "people who would like you to be serious, even angry, twenty-four hours a day. If you can't, then you're a renegade Negro, and they won't have too much to do with you. This world is very, very greasy, and it's going to slide a long way. They've been so used to putting it on a certain set of skids that they are quite sure that any way they set it—and at least they're thinking now about where the world should be set—it's the right way. Man, they want you to whip them, whip the shit out of them. But then, will you have energy for anything else? Look, I don't know you very well at all, but we're colored, we write, we talk that streevus mone shit and—thing is—thing is, somewhere in this business we got something together besides being colored and being writers. You're doing all right. Just don't never worry about a little pussy. I tell you this, knowing you can say it fifty billion times. But when you get a chick who can put it on you right with the right combination of other things, that's it, you're locked in and all the talkin' ain't going to help one bit." Ames laughed. "Listen to me. And I ain't even *had* my first one today. I'll call you at the paper, okay?"

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"Yes, Harry, and thanks."

Ames started away. He returned as Max started the car. "And I'll bet you that redhead wishes you two had been alone so no one could have heard, then it wouldn't have mattered."

"Aw," Max said, "now I'll probably never have a redhead."

"But, man, there are blondes, brunettes and blackheads. Or are you color oriented?" Ames walked away laughing. Max decided that he liked him. He pointed the car toward New York.

THE NEXT TIME HE SAW HARRY, Max asked, "Do you ever question the way you are, why you're a writer?"

"Every day."

Max waited for him to go on. It was a Saturday afternoon and the uptown bar had not yet filled with dapper Negroes starting the second leg of the weekend; Friday night was the first; Saturday into Sunday was the second, which was brought to an end only by habit of going to church Sunday morning or sleeping into Sunday afternoon.

Harry laughed. "Well, you're colored and you wonder how come you're a writer because there is no tradition of colored writers. Are we related to some ancient Yoruba folklorist, to Phillis Wheatley? I think about that. Then, somehow, it doesn't matter about the tradition; what matters is now. You wrote a book, Max, and published it. As I see it, that makes you, like me, a very special person among all the people who've ever lived. That's cause for some pride, I think; that's cause to produce more books. That also makes you dangerous because they don't burn people anymore, they burn books, and they don't always have bonfires. I love it like this; let there be a little danger to life, otherwise life is a lie.

"I'm the way I am, the kind of writer I am, and you may be too, because I'm a black man; therefore, we're in rebellion; we've got to be. We have no other function as valid as that one." Harry grinned. "I've been in rebellion, and a writer, I guess, ever since I discovered that even colored folks wanted to keep me away from books so I could never learn just how bad it all was. Maybe, too, to keep me from laughing at them. For taking it. My folks had a deathly fear of books."

Harry took a deep drink of his beer and gazed moodily around the bar, then he said, "There's something wrong with this ritual these people have here. Oh, hell, I like kicking it around all weekend, too, but that doesn't mean I can't see what's going on. A writer worth his salt is not going to write about how damned lovely it is; it isn't, that's why so many people tell themselves it is. But they don't want to hear what you've got to say if it isn't the same thing they can see or believe and that's going to make you a target. Talk about sitting ducks! You against them, and all you've got is a beat-up typewriter and some cheap rag bond. And your head.

"If your first book is any indication, you're a rebel, too, just as you should be. Don't be guilty if you make it and Negroes themselves start shooting you down; your subject will always be America or Americans. You didn't make the bed; you just have to lie in it. Even so, when my name is mentioned, I want people to jerk up and look for trouble; I want trouble to be my middle name when I write about America. I wouldn't like it if a single person slept well. We—you, me, and the others—have that function. I'll tell you why.

"In our society, which is white—we are intruders, they say—there has got to be something inherently horrible about having the sickness and weaknesses of that society described by a person who is a victim of them; for if he, the victim, is capable of describing what they have believed nonexistent, then they, the members of the majority, must choose between living the truth, which can be pretty grim, and the lie, which isn't much better. But, at least, they will then have the choice.

"It must be pretty awful for a white man to learn that one of the things wrong with this society is that it is not based on dollars directly or alone, but dollars denied men who are black so dollars can go into the pockets of men who are white. It must make white men ponder a kind of weakness that will make them deny work to black men so that work can be done by men who are white. How it must anger them to know finally that we know they deny women who are white to black men, while they have taken black women at will for generations.

"And don't they know or want to know that the absence of black voices in the state legislatures and in Congress, unheard since the Reconstruction, wounds them to the death? How painful would it be for them to admit that millions of acres of black men's lands were ripped from them by night riders and county clerks, and are still being held by the descendants of the thieves? Very painful. They'd have to give back those lands, those dollars, that work.

"Ah yeah, there's quite enough to be in rebellion about," Harry said, morosely. Harry jabbed himself in the chest. "Somewhere you know this and you're thinking twice about starting to work. Your job is to tell those people to stop lying, not only to us, but to themselves. You've written and in the process, somewhere in that African body of yours something said, 'I'm—a writer, a man, something, but here for today. Here for right now.' "

Harry waved to the waiter for more beer.

"That could make a man start thinking he's pretty important stuff, couldn't it, Harry?"

"Damn, Max. Don't you understand? If you don't have the perspective of yourself, can you expect other people to have it?"

But during the next weeks no amount of talking seemed to help. Max had a thousand abortive starts on the new novel, but none of them went past page three or four. In despair, he turned to his essays, but finally came to distrust them; he could not begin one with a question and answer it logically. "Does American democracy work?" Logically the essay could be completed by adding two letters: "No."

When he wrote, Max wanted to soar, to sing golden arias. But Zutkin's editor friend wanted emotion: anger, unreasonable black fury; screeching, humiliation, pain, subjects which evaded the essay; articles, yes; the essay, no. Do not sing, Max, the editors seemed to be saying. Instead, tell us, in your own words, in ten thousand words or less, just how much we've hurt you! We will pay handsomely for that revelation.

[7]

NEW YORK

MAX FELT AS IF HE COULD SLEEP. He was at peace. In four months he had written a novel complete with rewrites and it had been sold. He had already begun another. And Harry had just published another novel. It seemed to be going well with him and Charlotte now. (Yes, it had seemed so, then.) There was nothing quite like success, American Negro writer Harry Ames, noth-

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ing quite like it. It means that you stare at the cops just as long as they stare at you and a host of other things, right, Harry?

For Max, his own novel had begun new seepages in the old well; there was something down there, something after all. His book was about the war, of course, about Negro soldiers in Italy going up the mountains and down the mountains; it was about Cinquale, Grosseto, Viareggio. In the novel the fat woman became a young, almost innocent farm girl with whom the hero of the novel, a corporal, had fallen in love. The novel ended with white MP's catching the corporal and the girl in a barn and killing them and covering them with hay and horse manure.

"Great!" Max's editor had screamed. "Daring. Honest. Dynamic . . . " All the words and phrases that would be sent to echo in his ears for all the years he would be writing. Some of the words would fall into disuse, then be miraculously resurrected, and each time, for a while, they would have not a new, but at least a different meaning until the literary ferris wheel took them underneath again. Max didn't care except that he could repeat them to Lillian Patch, the girl he loved.

It happened in spring, two months after his discharge from Dix, while he was still living at the Y. He would look out the window of his room, straining to see the street below, but he could only see a small line of sidewalk across the street where the Y Annex was. But looking to the west he could see the white and gray buildings of City College. Then one day, when he was pleased with his work, he hurled a silent challenge at the City College buildings: I will walk to where you are and see if I can see my room from there. He never made it because of Lillian Patch. He followed her from Seventh Avenue, up the sheer rock steps to Morningside Heights to a drugstore on the corner of Broadway and 145th Street. He followed her, marveling; she fit so well with the day. She was young and lithe and she smiled. Mostly it was her posture. Loose it was, as a drifting on the wind, and yet there was a confident control that said, I know my body. In front of the drugstore he pulled abreast of her and found himself strangely tongue-tied. She did not pull away or scowl as Manhattan women usually do. Instead a half-smile came to her face, which was small with the cheekbones riding high along the sides. And when she smiled, the brown of her eyes, a kind of puce, was transformed into brown velvet, the shimmer of them deep. He looked down at her; she was small and that surprised him; she had seemed to have great height. Her skin was as the wet sand, brown, yet suggesting gold.

"I followed you, you see. It was spring—it's spring and it was too lovely to stay in and I came out and saw—you . . ." He told himself, Something is happening, something is *happening*. "Well," he tried to beat himself back, "a fine thing like you walkin' all alone on such a mellow day, and I—" He held up his hands then, and said, "I followed you. I didn't see your face until now. I want to be with you." He flinched from his own words. Seldom had he felt so vulnerable.

"What's your name?" she said.

Hell, he thought, voice too, oh, God, why didn't you let me stay in the Y?

"Max," he said almost too eagerly.

"Max," she said laughing, "are you part Jewish or something?"

"No, all spook, one hundred per cent spook. I think."

"I'm Lillian. I have never been followed so far. One or two blocks, you know with the usual—'shake it but don't break it, baby' comments. Sometimes they make me feel good. Would you buy me a Coke?"

"Sure," Max said, charging into the drugstore, biting his tongue to keep from saying, I'll buy you *any*thing, any*thing*. He drank three Cokes, she drank one. "You have a last name? Mine's Patch."

"Reddick."

"Are you a veteran?"

"I'm afraid so. Why?"

"I don't know."

"Like veterans?" Some of these broads *still* see a uniform on every vet.

"Not particularly. Don't dislike them either. Max?"

Max almost broke his back turning around; something about her tone of voice. But she said, "Never mind. I don't want to know."

"What?"

"What you do."

"Oh."

"I'm a teacher, you see. Nosey."

"It's all right. Can we walk some more?"

"I live just down the block, but maybe we can sit in the park for a while."

On the way down to the park, Max kept thinking, I ain't never been in love before, if this is what it feels like. Good God! Max, baby! Lookit you! He wanted to touch her arm as they went down the steep hill, but he merely looked and smiled, as she did. She pointed to her home when they passed it; she lived with her parents. They were getting old now and she was the only child and she didn't want to leave them. She had the entire second floor to herself. When, after talking in the park for an hour, she said she had to go home, he said, "But when will I see you again?"

[Now, he remembered how she had turned ever so slowly to look at the Palisades, then back to him, saying sprightly] "How's about now, for dinner?" They held hands going back to the house, resigned, overwhelmed, aware of all the Hollywood Boy-Meets-Girl movies, American Love riddled with clichés: eyes, hands, facial expressions, the lot, and after meeting her folks, they went upstairs to her apartment (her mother did the dishes, she was a working girl) talked some more, with long, long pauses in between and many exchanges of the eyes until he simply stood up, gently holding her hand and pulled her to him. There was no resistance, and it rode them down, that thing, swept them up and left them in a silence in which they held each other desperately as if afraid to be blown away. No, Max said to himself. No, no. "What is it?" she asked.

"I am talking to this real dumb guy, Max Reddick," he said.

"About what?"

"I'm telling him, 'No, no, it can't be.' "

Lillian smiled. "And what is that real dumb guy answering?"

"You really want to know?"

"Of course."

"He's answering, crudely because he is crude, 'You're a boom-boom liar, it is *too*!' "

Later Max had run up the hill to Broadway singing at the top of his voice, shimmying when he came to a stop, one of his hands held across his stomach as he shuffled across the sidewalk.

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"GA-OOD GOD!" HARRY SAID, pulling Max away from where Lillian and Charlotte were chatting. "Where did you find *that?*" Now, speaking rapidly, Harry said, "I tell you, Max, if she wasn't yours—oh, Lordie Lord—fweepis fwap and ditty-dit-dat!"

Max knew that what Harry was saying was this: I don't give a damn if she's yours or not! Given the chance, baby, given the chance . . .

And Max was suddenly angry, angry at Harry, angry at Charlotte, whose eyes, he could see, were measuring Lillian and doing something else as well. It was the way women were, he guessed, but wasn't she somehow telling Lillian *some*thing? Telling her in that way women have—the eyes (the ever-so-studied, so possessive glance that told the other woman that you *knew*, yes, positively knew what those pants contained, how the arms fit and all) the voice that did things when it should have done nothing or, on the other hand, did nothing when it should have done something. Almost like a double exposure, Max seemed to see Charlotte again holding Harry's head in her lap at Wading River on the day he met Ames. He had seen something then. How much was there to see?

There came a peal of laughter from Lillian and suddenly, as though coming out of a fever, Max dismissed most of his recent thoughts. Lillian was not laughing with Charlotte so much as *at* her. Neither Harry nor Charlotte had seemed to mind Mary from the newspaper office, or those others. After all, a man had to get his nuts off. (And after all, in Harlem there was untold prestige in getting as much pussy as possible, in having cats whisper to one another as you passed: That cat is a *Cocksman*'s Cocksman!) But now, there was something different with Harry and Charlotte, a kind of hostility Max felt floating around the table. Then he knew what it was, at least on Charlotte's part. The girl he should have fallen in love with should have been white. His loving Lillian was a rejection of their marriage. He was a traitor. Where was his courage to face the world with a white wife and say to it: Screw you, jack!

("—don't you, Max, don't you?")

("I guess so. Logical.") That bitch, Charlotte, Max was thinking while Harry went on talking after Max had thrown out an answer calculated to show that he was still with him. Harry was talking about Africa, a continent where freedom was going to break out with a bang. The British, French and Portuguese were going to pack up and go home. The United Nations might be a good thing, if it avoided the trap the League of Nations had fallen into. "Africa and Asia," Harry said. "The other side of the globe, that's where things are going to be happening, and I want to be there when they do. Here, it's the same. Look what they did to Robeson in Peekskill; that colored vet whose eyes they gouged out down home. Nothing's changed."

"But we should hope for a change for the better," Lillian said with such confidence that it startled Max.

Harry pushed back his chair. "Why?"

Lillian opened her mouth, pursed it, relaxed. This man would not be argued with. She felt something akin to distaste for Harry and Charlotte. She laughed. Max smiled. Harry chuckled but he was puzzled. Charlotte flashed a look at him, bent her head and played with the silver.

Max and Harry moved into the living room. Max could never help looking at the bookshelves and particularly the one where Harry's books stood. Max always counted them. Charlotte and Lillian were in the kitchen, cleaning up. Max had liked it that Lillian had not volunteered to help, but Charlotte had not been above asking for it. Then Lillian had jumped up brightly. "Oh yes, of course!"

"I was talking with a man from Nigeria," Harry went on, still talking about Africa. "He figures that at the outside, they should be rid of England in ten years. Can you imagine that? A free Africa. Big, rich, three hundred million people, untold wealth. Can't you see what will have to happen to the white man's politics? Africa, Max, I tell you, that's the only frontier left on the globe. Keep it in mind. I know all those stories the white folks have told us for years. But, listen, if white folks took so much time to tell us how bad and silly and heathen it is, then it can't be so bad. What have they ever told us that was of any use?"

Africa. The continent had been like something you knew you had to buy or see or go to, but always forgot. The Black Is Best groups were always talking about it. Then there were the J. A. Rogers books and Max had read them many times, with tremendous doubt and with humor. The Africans had kings and princes and great armies and wealth and culture, Rogers said. Maybe so. The books in the Schomburg Collection up on 135th Street near Lenox also hinted as much. The Collection was some place. Every Negro feeling the toe of the world halfway up his ass could duck in there and read about how great Africa was and how great black people in general were, but few had done it. The white man's hate-self-serum had created a hard stale rind of disbelief.

But it tantalized, Africa. But which was real, Mungo Park's or René Maran's? Garvey's vision of it or Stanley's dollar-propelled race through it? There were bright spots. The Fuzzy-Wuzzys, the Mahdi kicking the shit out of the British in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, the Ethiopians cutting the balls off the Italians at Adowa, the Zulus cutting up the British.

But why think of it in terms of wars? Why? Because that's just the way the white folks spelled it out. Francis X. Bushman, Glenn Morris, Johnny Weissmuller, Lex Barker, all kicking the natural pure-dee apeshit out of the natives. Go, Tarzan, just don't let them Zulus (Negro actors who ate every time they made a Tarzan movie) catch you with your codpiece down. Or Jane. Maybe you'd better put Boy in a safe place too. You know how them niggers are. Not really like Gunga Din at all.

"Damn it, let's go there some time," Harry said.

"Sure, why not?" They were always planning to do things together, but at the last moment, something happened. Might not be a bad idea, Africa.

But now he was walking through upper Manhattan with Lillian. They came out of the subway at 116th Street, so different from Washington Square Park, the Village. They couldn't even see downtown Manhattan; it was hidden by the trees in Central Park. Up on 145th Street, Max knew, you could stand on a corner and see all the way downtown or, at least, that rigid, square spire, the Empire State Building. One and the same. Uptown where they were, life still flooded the streets, horse-drawn junk wagons, their drivers asleep, clip-clopped past them. The new sounds drifted out of Minton's, new sounds that no one could dance to anymore. They called the music rebop or bebop and it was played by musicians with crazy names like Monk, Bird, Diz, Fats, Sweets, Little Jazz. These were the streets that belonged to Sugar Ray, the Cutie,

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the Unscarred, and to a fat, balding Joe Louis and a bullet-headed Jersey Joe Walcott. On the corners men stood loudly exchanging jokes and gossip. And the hustlers went by, little ones, big ones, ugly ones, attractive ones, with big tits and little tits, with big butts and no butts at all, and each of them seemed to say with their stride, I got the best that's going. The muscatel smell lingered on corners like a live thing. Ghetto. The people who lived south of Central Park even concealed their lights behind the curtain of trees to avoid exciting the natives. (Watch that codpiece, Tar-zan.) Off in an alley somewhere, Max bet, someone, frustrated and drunk with whiskey and rage at Mister Charlie (although he wouldn't be aware of it; he would lie to himself) was making a pincushion of a man in his own color-image, another Sambo. A man had to strike out. They moved down the street, past Big Ola Mae's chili house and turned off the street at the Nearly All Inn for one for the road.

He sat across the table from Lillian and let his eyes tell her that he loved her. Insane when you thought of many animals, their love and hate, the swift couplings and even swifter departures. This thing men have, he thought, this love and loving, how unnatural! What causes it, fear? Possession, like the animals, but bound by men's laws which have also been worse than animal laws. No. Not as good. The laws of man condemned you to repeat over and over the rituals of love and loving to the death. Love. Marriage. A thing for the poor (natives also) to keep them happy, while kings screwed themselves to death or *got* screwed to death, but while all this was going on, there always being more poor than rich people, the attitudes and habits, the arts and language overtook the rich in their clappy beds and shitty castles and made marriage, and love, the human condition. But is the Bible first concerned with man-woman love? No. Stop fighting. Did Rameses ever order a statue of his love? No. Me, me, me. Ever go into a cave and see a prehistoric drawing of a man and woman, boy and girl in the postures of love? No. Animals, yet, eating stuff. Did the White Lady of Brandberg on that cave wall in Southwest Africa allow herself to be discovered in a compromising position? No. She was out hunting, surrounded by hunters and Springbok, looking for that eating stuff again. So what? Lillian, I love you.

They finished the drink and walked once more. Max was still thinking of love when she spoke. The heart, they used it for everything: courage, guts, love. ("Have you ever slept with Charlotte?")

Floomp, the heart again. Nothing in the head, just a new set of dials turned on. She knows something, Max thought. No, she's guessed something, and he thought once more of how Charlotte had been at dinner. ("No, why do you ask that?")

"Oh, I just wondered. I'm not jealous."

He heard her clearly now, all thoughts of love whisked away in favor of defending himself. Stoutly. "That's a hell of a thing to be thinking about."

"I'm sorry then."

"What if I'd said yes?"

"I didn't expect you would, Max."

They both sighed with relief when they entered his apartment. It had gotten chilly and too much walking when you are in love can be exhausting. Lillian opened the nightcase she had brought before they had gone to Harry's and pulled out a gown. She was going, she had told her parents, to visit a friend in New Rochelle for the weekend. She looked at the bag and said aloud, "They know. Most people know things. All they want is a lie plausible enough to believe."

"Stop it," Max said. She was, of course, referring to her earlier question about Charlotte. He put his head in her lap. She said, "It was before I met you. I don't care if you did. She is nice and not nice. Harry—"

Max sat up. "What about Harry?"

Lillian put the gown down and got up to make drinks. "Does he really make a living, writing?"

"Yes."

"But he's written more books than you."

"Yes, he's also a little older. Lillian, what is it?"

"Nothing, here." She gave him his drink.

"Don't do that."

"What?"

"Start something and not finish it."

"Sorry."

"Go on."

"With what? Really, there's nothing."

"Sure?"

"Yes."

Max gulped his drink. "Okay. One more, then to bed."

Lillian watched him from the chair. She was so quiet that Max turned. "Okay, now what?"

She laughed and went to him, holding him tightly. "Ah, well, Honey?"

"Tell me what."

"Oh, I've got my period." She didn't look at him.

"Oh, hell, baby," Max said. "Are you sure?" Then they both laughed.

It was sometime during the far side of the night. Both had heard and seen separately something in black (was it?), prancing at the top of a hill, ready to gallop down. Max turned first. Lillian was there in her sleep, refusing to wake completely, enveloped in that millennia-old dream of women to be taken, to be had; and she was warm when Max slipped the gown from her and the nipples of her breasts grew taut and hard; her skin rippled and her light bones slipped under it. Max came at her and his dream was old too, the dream of men to take (and therefore be free, animal-like, of the consequences) and to match the mock submission, he created a mock rage and they stroked and kissed on the knife edge of capture and theft. And they knew each of them, the reality and fantasy of what they were doing and their movements were gentle, as if with great sorrow. Even the bed gave back no sound. After, they held each other; their orgasms had been long and sweet and thorough, as if to signify that that narrow place between what was real and what was not, was the best place after all.

Max woke as the first gray sifted through the room. "Lillian," he said, pushing her gently. "Lillian. Let's get married, okay? Okay, Lillian?"

She pushed herself up on her elbows. "Could we live on your writing?" Max recoiled. He had some money in the bank from the folks' house. He hadn't made a dime on his first novel, but had got good money as an advance for his current one, $750. He had socked away his mustering-out pay and was a member in good standing of the 52-20 club, and had disability coming. But. "I don't know. Some of it would be a little rough, but not all of it."

Lillian hated this; she didn't look at him. She remembered

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the conversation she had had with her parents. "He's a writer," she had told them.

"Yes," her father had said, "but where does he *work*?"

"Couldn't you write nights and work?" Her voice was a little plaintive and she hated it. The stories of writers were romantic and all, but you couldn't eat romance, that kind, sitting around *in garrets and drinking Chianti. Besides, who ever heard of a* Negro writer making money? The Ames home wasn't so great. The dishes were chipped, the chairs didn't match, the kid was a mess. What happened when people stopped being nice to Harry Ames, where did they go from there? They didn't even teach English very well where Lillian had gone to school, just so some nut wouldn't get the idea that he wanted to be a writer. Now she glanced at Max. "I've gone and spoiled it, haven't I?" She took his hand.

"No," he said. "I'm so damned full now. I'd hate to lose everything working. I feel free for the first time in my life. What would there be besides the *Democrat*? There aren't that many jobs downtown; things haven't changed that much, Lillian."

"You could—" she knew she shouldn't be doing this. "—teach, or do casework . . ."

"And if I don't?"

"Then we'll have to work something out."

Max slumped down into the bed. There were always choices. What choice was there to make? He wanted her. Already it hurt to think of not having her. But Jesus, where in the hell was there a job in New York City for him? Madison Avenue? Park Row? Teaching? Social work, who wanted to do that? That got you right next to *them* again, the ones who hurt so damned much that they spilled over on you, like thick sap from a tree in spring. Get a job? Man, wasn't that like the American dream? Boy meets girl, gets good job and everything's all reet. "Wow, honey," he said aloud.

Lillian lay on her side of the bed staring at the wall. The black thing she had seen on the hill just before they made love, moved a little, downhill. Now Lillian knew what Charlotte and Harry had seen: a middle-class Negro girl whose father was a bank janitor and whose mother worked for rich theater people on Central Park West. All right. So what? Did that mean that she could ignore security, the crushing desire to have it? Along with love, and she loved Max. But he was black. Of course he was black, but Negro men, they had a way of starting out with a bang, with the long, long dream, but ending with less than a whisper, so beaten were they simply because they had dared to dream in the first place. Max, her Max, was a man with dreams, but he had to see the hard reality of the present. You couldn't eat dreams; they wouldn't even put cheap, gaudy furniture from the 125th Street stores into your home. If you dreamed too much you got hurt. In her classes she could look out on the children and knew that killers were already stalking their dreams. How had Max managed to elude the killers? Suppose Max said no. He wouldn't say no; he couldn't say no, and she knew it as well as he did. Charlotte had seen all this, the whore, white whore.

Max twisted in the sheets. In the final analysis there is always something someone wants. Lillian was special because she never took from him the way others did when they saw him coming; she had asked for nothing, until now. Now what she was asking for might be the most important thing of all and he had no choice but to give it to her.

[8]

NEW YORK

MAX REDDICK WAS EVIL. He wanted to punch out every white face he saw. Evil was beyond anger; it was a constant state, the state of destruction, someone else's. Impatiently he rattled the doorknob. C'mon, Harry, you sonofabitch; let me in from these white folks' streets. He glanced behind him. February. Cold, New York cold where the saline air punched holes in the snow and made it melt faster. Today had been payday for Max. For weeks he had been kept dangling, waiting for the final word to come in on several job applications with newspapers and magazines. He wouldn't have been kept dangling at all had it not been for Kermit Shea.

They had been at Western Reserve at the same time, had met at political meetings often enough to nod to each other, nothing more. Max learned that Shea worked for the *Telegram*. They had had coffee and drinks together a few times, again, until Max walked into the *Telegram* office to apply for a job and found Shea in charge of Cityside news. Max knew as he filled out his application that Shea was embarrassed. To hell with him. Shea told him the *Telegram* was full up, but expecting departures momentarily, then steered Max to a number of other editors. The interviews were always the same: colorful newsmen's jabber, changing constantly in order to avoid falling into general use by the public. These were followed by the application form ritual and, finally, (sometimes days later, sometimes at once) the leaning back in the chair, man to man ("You and I are above all this, but the publisher ain't and he's the man who lays out the shekels, right? [The implication being that the Jews were driving the WASP's out of newspaper publishing] but call me next month, right, Max?") And then the handshakes that said that the time wasn't right, but when it is, Max, boy will we call you!

There wasn't a newspaper downtown that Max had missed, armed with Shea's recommendation. Shea had stopped talking about jobs at the *Telegram*. But today had been payday. It had been Shea, that bitterly cold morning, who had turned his chair over to an old criminal courts reporter for an hour so he could spring for drinks. Drinks, that basic American ritual for saying hello, goodbye, it's good to be home unwinding, you're fired, you don't have it. Like that. And yet Max had come to like Shea, a tall gangling man with prematurely graying hair and a face still filled with childish fat. Over drinks Max could tell that Shea was discovering for the first time in his life what kind of world he lived in, what kind of world he had helped to build simply by not building at all. For Max it was the end of the rope as far as downtown was concerned.

If he still wanted Lillian, it would have to be the Harlem *Democrat*, if it would have him. The routine would be galling and regressive. There was no more time to crap around. But what if the crap really had flopped all over the place? Say all the papers had called the *Democrat* for references. Wow! If the people at the *Democrat* even *thought* he had been trying to get a job downtown they'd give him the shaft. Was it human nature or the human nature of blacks bombarded with miniscule hatreds hourly that would make them happy to turn him away just as Mister Charlie downtown had? It would, in

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fact, give them more pleasure. No, there was no more time. Lillian Patch was pregnant.

Lillian wanted an abortion because, she said, she did not want to push Max into anything he wasn't ready for. Max, on the other hand, was willing to marry and settle for the *Democrat* and write nights. Or was he? Wasn't he going to ask Harry this morning for the name of a doctor who could do the abortion—if they both finally agreed on it? C'mon, Harry, open the goddamn door! Now, he was even getting pissed off at Kermit Shea. Hell, he was white, why not? Aw, crap.

Then Harry was at the door, letters held in his hand. One of the letters had been opened and fleetingly, as Max brushed past, cursing, he noticed an exultant smile on Harry's face.

"How'd it go?" Harry asked. "You going to the city editor for the *Times*?"

"Fuck you, Harry."

"Oh-oh," Harry mocked. "Them white folks been mistreating Max again. Mean to tell me that between Zutkin and Shea, you couldn't get set up? Still walking heavily up the carpeted steps, Harry went on. "I got a tremendous morning's work done. It flowed like piss after twenty bottles of beer. Hit it right on the button."

But inside the apartment, Harry took a look at Max's face and stopped the fooling. But he gave it one more try. "Uncle Harry told you how it was, Max. Sit down, I'll give you a drink. Read this."

Max peeled off his coat. It was too much to be faced week after week with the lies, the evasions, even the crudeness, which had been welcome sometimes. He didn't remember when he had felt the first stirrings of undirected anger; now it seemed to have been with him all along and was just finding an avenue of escape. He sat down and read the letter Harry had given him. It said:

Dear Mr. Ames:

I am writing to inform you that the American Lyceum of Letters has chosen you as the recipient of a Fellowship to the American Lykeion in Athens for the year June 1947-June 1948, subject to the approval of the American Lykeion in Athens.

The Fellowship carries a stipend of $1,000 a year, payable in monthly installments, transportation ($450), free residence at the Lykeion, $150 for books and supplies, and an additional allowance of $500 for European travel. All Fellows pay for their food at cost and a study will be provided for your personal use. The $500 balance of the $2,600, which is given to the Lykeion in Athens, is kept by the Lykeion for the various services they render you.

Presentation of this award will be made at our annual ceremonial, to be held on Thursday afternoon, May 24, at three o'clock. We hope so much that you will attend the ceremonial and the luncheon that precedes it at 12:30 p.m.

It would be appreciated if for the time being you would treat this information as confidential since it will not be released to the press until late in April.

May I offer you my warm personal congratulations upon the action of the Lyceum.

Max was showered in his own jealousy, he writhed in it. How in the holy hell could anyone get such great news on a day when he felt so rotten, so up against it, so wickedly caught in the Audacious Stink of Americana? Then, lo and behold, old God lettering the tablet with lightning, miracle of miracles, no Audacious Stink at all! America the beautiful, God shed His Grace on thee! It was too much. One minute they really, *really* got it reamed up your ass, and the next minute Miss Liberty is giving you the most fantastic blow job you ever had. How can you make these bastards out? They keep you off balance. They lift while they depress. They take you apart, then saw you back together and sometimes you don't even want to be the Frankenstein they have made you. Goddamn them! Max looked up and smiled. "Did you make these drinks triple, man?"

Harry, almost ashamed of his luck and now sharply aware that he must mute his joy because of Max's depression, said, "If you don't have anything to do, we can really celebrate."

"Where's Charlotte?"

"Oh, she's gone to visit her mother. You know, the once a month thing, early in the day to keep people from staring when she gets out of the cab with the kid. Her father's not home then, you know."

"Yeah. Look, Harry, that's great, really great. Will you go?"

"That'll put me pretty close to Africa, won't it?" Harry broke into a smile. "Goddamn it, Max, they're beginning to know I'm here, that we're here. Max, this could be a whole new thing. Keep your fingers crossed. We're coming up, Max. Ain't no stopping us. Who's that boy got such a great review in the *Times*, you know him?" Harry retrieved the *Book Review*. "Marion Dawes."

"I don't know him," Max said, amused. "One of these days," Max went on, "them people are going to kick your ass for you. Good."

"Oh, hell. Then I'd be finished in this town, wouldn't I?"

They laughed. "Wait until Charlotte comes home," Harry said, then, "How's Lillian?"

"We need a doctor." Max handed Harry his empty glass. Harry took it, nodding. "How far?"

"Little over two."

"What about the wedding?" Harry was shouting from the kitchen now. Max found it too trying to shout anymore. He waited until Harry returned. "She is not sure."

"You?"

"Yes. I mean, I guess so. There's always the *Democrat*."

"And the new book?"

Max scoffed. "What new book?"

"Man, but I told you," Harry said loudly. "When you have a book ready to come out, as you have in a couple of months, you should always have something in the oven, 'cause they'll forget you in a flash. They wash white writers right down the drain. You *know* what they'll do for us!"

"The doctor, Harry. I just want the name of a doctor. Right now, man, I just can't cut it."

"Okay, Max. Let me make some calls. Want some soup? It's on the stove."

APPARENTLY NEARLY EVERYONE in New York knew the doctor. There was a little history that went with him. It seemed that his only daughter had "got into trouble" and had an abortion by some hack and died. The good doctor thereafter set himself up for the major purpose of providing abortions for young women who had got into similar "trouble." There was only one hitch, the talk went. The doctor required two visits, one to determine the condition of the patient medically and psychologically, for he would never do an abortion if he felt the couple were good for each other. The doctor was said to have been responsible

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for more successful marriages than all the marriage counselors, priests, ministers and marriage computors put together. There was a second visit only if the doctor deemed the relationship a detriment.

As it turned out, of course, the doctor was nothing like that at all. He insisted that he did not know the reference Harry had got for them; that he was a legitimate general practitioner operating well within the law and that he felt insulted that they had come to him. Unless, of course, someone in New York City was playing a joke. No, he didn't know anyone who would. Had Max never heard of the Medical Ethic?

Max and Lillian drove back to New York in almost complete silence. The landscape that flashed past them was hard frozen, as stiff as the black leafless trees. Lillian felt empty. She was almost tempted once or twice to ask Max to stop at the nearest justice of the peace, but she knew that would be no good. He had no job yet, the future wasn't even on the horizon. She had counted on Charlotte's set knowing about these things. After all, *they* were involved in these things more often than Negro girls. But, see? Nothing, not one damned thing. Oh, you just can't trust those people. But it wasn't their fault, really. It was hers. Max felt that it was his too, but it wasn't. She simply had never been much good at counting, that's all there was to it. Well, she'd get back to New York and see about this whole business herself. If you looked hard enough for a thing, you found it. Now Max was saying something about forgetting it and getting married, that things would work out. Good God! Lillian thought. Doesn't he know that those last words are as famous as Lenox Avenue and 125th Street? The cry of Harlem: Things Would Work Out. That was all the white folks ever left, some bedraggled hope. And she answered him with a grunt. What, what was that he was saying, that Negro women had the proud tradition of keeping their children, no matter what? That white people had them cut out of them with no remorse, no nothing. What does this man understand? Doesn't he know that it is all those babies that help create the valley Negroes live in? Doesn't he know that Mister Charlie knew what he was doing when he took away everything except the ability to make love? Max, you are distraught. You aren't thinking. Love? Oh, Max, yes, but love with sense.

She would find a way; someone would know something for sure. Not in Harlem. There were abortionists there, but the women doubled as hustlers, barmaids, distributors of election campaign material, numbers runners, midwives, boosters and baby-sitters. There had to be something else. The men who were either doctors or orderlies or morticians, charged too much and talked too much. "It will be all right," Lillian said when Max let her out at home.

"What do you mean?"

"What I said."

"Come back here," he said. "Come here!" She returned to the car. "I want to know what you meant by that, Lillian. I want to know."

"I meant that I wouldn't let it worry me. We'll come up with something."

"Look, please, let's not do it. Suppose something happens. It will work out. You're tearing me apart. You're making me think I'm not worth anything, that I don't have what it takes to make it. Let's have the kid."

"No, Max, I can't."

Max sighed. "Baby, please don't do anything foolish. I'll call you tomorrow."

It was painful to call two or three times a day now. There was nothing to say and seldom anything to report in the way of finding a doctor. So the calls were now down to once a day and their voices were low, as if barricaded against some evil word slipping out that they could never recapture and hide away. So many times he had wanted to shout out: "Careless bitch, you, Lillian!" And she had wanted to say that he had been inconsiderate, that they *never* saw each other when he hadn't wanted to make love, and that she had told him she wasn't sure and therefore hadn't her thing and he hadn't wanted to use a condom.

Dully, Max watched her enter her house. There was a finality about her movements that made him uneasy. She didn't even turn around to wave goodbye. She was up to something. Fuck around now and get killed, he thought in a grim panic. C'mon, Shea, he thought; c'mon, Zutkin, one of you goodie-goodie bastards. Can't you see I'm hurting, *hurting*, and my girl, my woman, is hurting. My whole motherfucking life is a gaping, stinking hurt! *Give me my share! I am a man. Don't make me take it in this anger!* Hot tears poured from his eyes and blinded him along with his anger. He snatched the wheel and the car spun around, skidded across the street on a patch of ice and ran up on the curb. He started the car again and climbed up the hill in first gear.

One week later when her school let out, Lillian went downtown instead of up. She was going to take the bus to Paterson, New Jersey. She had found a doctor. It was all arranged. She would be met outside the terminal by the nurse who would drive her to the office. Afterward, she would be driven back across the George Washington Bridge and placed in a cab. Then she would be on her own. No curettage would be necessary. She would be all right. That was the doctor's personal guarantee. The whole business would cost four hundred dollars.

Lillian felt both relief and dread. Relief that she had found someone to do it, and dread that she had to go through it alone. Just once, while waiting for the bus, she thought to call Max and ask him to be at her house when she returned, although she didn't really know what time that would be. But it would be nice to know that he was there waiting for her. She did not call. She had gone this far without him. She would finish it. Then they'd both be more careful, very careful until things worked out for the future. Going over the bridge, she saw the sullen clouds break long enough for a smear of bright, golden sun to appear, far, far ahead of her in the west. Then she went to sleep, taking that as a good omen. A relieved half-smile came to her small face marked by the high-riding cheekbones. As she relaxed and became as one with the gently jostling bus, Lillian Patch, in an instant's panic, felt that the thing she had seen in her half-sleep months ago was breaking blackly down that long, eerie hill, coming directly at her.

IT WAS ELEVEN O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING. Once again the city was in the grip of a long, bitter freeze. The thick ice and snow in the roads and on the walks showed no sign of thawing. Inside his apartment, Max Reddick, who hated rye, poured himself a half glass of it. Everything else was gone. He took his trousers off the bed and stepped carefully into them. Slowly, he zipped up the fly and fastened the belt, staring at himself all the while in the mirror, which reflected the bed behind him. From the bed they had been able

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to see themselves in the mirror. Now Max flapped the tie around his neck, paused to drink, then knotted the tie. He pulled the jacket on and, in a sullen daze, patted it down his body. Black suit for dress, black suit for death. Still moving slowly, he went to the bed and snatched off its covers. On his knees now, he looked closely at the blankets and sheets. One by one he plucked up her hairs, the tightly curled, dully glowing pubic hairs, the long, thinner, brighter head hairs. He stood and rubbed them between his thumb and finger. He brought them back to the mirror and laid them on the dresser next to the whiskey. He looked up at his reflection and thought, I am as dead as she. Deader.

He had called her that night, at the time she usually was home. Her mother said that she hadn't come home yet, and somehow, right away, Max had known. He called later and still Lillian had not come home. He did not call again, foreseeing that the conversation would be stiff or angry. It was only later that he learned that:

She had come home very late. Her parents heard her moving softly around her rooms. Then, there had been silence. Later they heard her again; she seemed to be bumping into things. They had heard her in the bathroom, then out on the stairs. Later they figured out that she had been trying to call them. They had not heard. But they did hear the noise of her falling down the stairs; they found her at the foot of them. The trail of blood went back up the carpeted steps into the bathroom where it was a wide splotch, neatly marked with splatters, into her bedroom and in her bed. Her parents had called the police who came with an ambulance. But the hemorrhage had been sudden and deadly. The next afternoon when Max had called, Lillian Patch was dead.

It will be all right.

What do you mean?

What I said.

Come back here. Come here! I want to know what you meant by that, Lillian. I want to know.

I meant that I wouldn't let it worry me. We'll come up with something.

Yeah, something like death.

Max couldn't get their last scene together out of his mind. If only he'd gotten out of the car and walked to the door with her! If he'd gone in and had a cup of coffee with her! If he had given her just one pecking little kiss, maybe . . .!

Max Reddick stared back at himself as he fingered Lillian's hairs with one hand and finished the whiskey with the other. I'll never forgive them. And they don't even know what they did! *They don't even know!* He felt a rage growing within him, small at first, like the cyclone on the horizon, and then it came spinning up, blacker and redder, faster and faster. He could break the mirror, the glass he held in his hand; he could smash the chairs, kick in the bed, tear the books off the shelves, snap records in two, throw shoes through the windows.

But he knew if he had five hundred years in which to smash, it would be as nothing because it wouldn't hurt them at all. He would be just another Negro gone berserk, and they would read about him and think: he should have jumped right up and run after another girl, this one with yellow shoes, maybe. Goddamn them! They could not be accused or convicted of murder, or even being near the scene of the crime. What did they have to do with Lillian's death? Everything, and yet, they believed, would continue to believe, nothing. Max wanted to march them into ovens a million at a time; he wanted to see heaps of them dead, mountain-high heaps; he wanted the stink of their decomposing bodies to choke the very atmosphere.

But, *damn them*! They refused to understand why he wanted them dead. This was why: they gave Lillian the photograph, the image of the American Family Group, but when she looked very, very closely, she wasn't in it; she wasn't even the blanked-out one of every ten who would contract polio or clap or pox; nor was she the one who wasn't insured by Metropolitan Life or Allstate. She was nothing and she was not to get that little house surrounded by shrubbery and a white picket fence. But they let her teach about America the Beautiful, and she knew it was not—after all, she saw those kids five days a week and sometimes chased them from the backs of buses on weekends —they let her teach that shit and she knew it was not, but hoped it was and, my darling bitch, Lillian, you got to hoping more than knowing.

Baby, didn't you understand? You over*whelmed* with your blackness, your babies; you choked them with the reek and tremor of the ghettos they created; you screamed at their injustices which they denied because they must; you stacked up, created a backlog of book-hungry kids before the doors of their quota-oriented colleges, their Wall Streets, communications centers, their theaters; you gave them political hacks, the ones who are worse liars and thieves than they, only to create a wedge through which the uncompromising can later pass; you produced good music for them to copy or steal—and you wrote more; you gave them your sons to help fight their wars (but that must stop—a dead Negro on a German, Japanese, French, American battlefield does very little for a live Negro pinioned to his ghetto). Out of all the garbage they leave for you, you produce, produce, produce, and scare the hell out of them, for if something can be made from garbage, why is it that they have only automobiles, Lillian? See what that desire for old American security got you, baby? Security. You are so goddamn secure now that you don't have to worry about where the next *any*thing is coming from. And God knows, you don't have to worry about me having a decent job so we can live the way you thought we ought to—according to their way, which is, my darling, as pitiable as it is, the only way now. Look what you've gone and done. They have killed both of us. God, Lillian, I'm mad, I am so mad, baby, and sorry for them, for me, for you. How did we get *down here?* We should have been out of here by now. Are we going to have to explode out? Max moved away from the mirror and all he could do was to shake his head very, very slowly.

KERMIT SHEA SAT AT HIS DESK and stared at the gray, sluggish Hudson River. He felt that it was his fault, Max's girl's death. He had failed. Ames had wanted him to feel that way, of course, nothing subtle about it. Shea wondered if he had really tried. Yes. Yes, but in trying to help Max with a job, he had felt himself threatened. Strange, the way you felt it even in the phone calls. Then there were the looks when he had mentioned that Max was Negro. Shea hadn't known Ames except by reputation. "My name is Harry Ames, and I am Max Reddick's friend," he had said over the phone. The only friend? Shea had wondered. "He's had some trouble. I thought you ought to know about it." And Ames had told him and he might just as well have added: feel guilty, you sonofabitch! Shea hadn't known

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a thing about the girl, but now he understood Reddick's curious detachment: he didn't want rejection, he needed a job desperately, but he *expected* rejection, which he got. "When's the funeral?" Shea had asked, and Ames had told him and then added, "But you'd better not come."

How many other Max Reddicks and Lillian Patches were out there, Shea wondered, with talents and desires ignored, indeed, unattributed to them? What happened to them and how often? And how thick were those gray ranks who had said to Shea, "How come you know this Negro guy?" All the ramifications of that question, the inherent threat, the contempt and—was it concealed fear? Ames had done his job well. Shea continued to stare at the river. Reddick, what was he doing this day of the funeral? Cursing all white people past hell and into oblivion. Shea didn't want to be among them on that journey. He wanted to lead them. He felt that guilty.

BERNARD ZUTKIN'S OFFICE was on the East Side. He sat in it and it was quiet, and that suited him. He had no intention of going to the funeral, although he hadn't been asked. He understood. A man like Max Reddick knew exactly what had happened to him, to his girl, and why. In trying to help Max get a job, Zutkin had reconfirmed his own position in the literary and communications circles in New York: he was not a well-liked man. He drove hard. His view was uncluttered. He was a critic, not a reviewer. He knew the difference. When he chose to write, he was an author, not a writer. And because he was this precise, his analyses of the communications media had earned him a steady flow of dislike. Zutkin was also a Jew in a shrinking world of Gentiles who did not understand the process of their own abdication of responsibility in both communications and literature (he disliked the term "publishing"). Gentiles had run out of family blood; now they were being beaten out or getting out. When they finally realized what they had done to themselves, they would react just like the Germans. Anti-semitism was always in the American air, Zutkin knew, and to avoid the recurrence of what had happened in Germany, the Jew needed allies. There was the Negro who himself needed allies. But sadly, many of Zutkin's friends who were Jewish and had matched his own climb up the ladder, had taken over Gentile traits. "Look, Bernie, you know and I know that this is not the time for that!"

"Well, when is the right time, do you think?"

"Don't be a *macher*, Bernie. The time will come. Why don't *you* hire Reddick?"

"I'm a critic. I have an office. I teach, I'm a professor. How could I use a man like Reddick? And you know all this. The man needs a job now. You've read his books and pieces."

"So, I'm impressed. Now what?"

"Now? Nothing. Sorry to have been foolish enough to have asked a favor of you, Sweetheart."

"Aw, Bernie—"

"The devil take you, *schmuck*."

Most of Zutkin's calls had been like that or something like that. Stupid people. Time would run out and turn upon itself. One of these days assassins might have to be sent after people like Reddick and Ames because some jerk didn't want to give them a job they could do with one hand because they were black. They would have to be silenced somehow. They were learning too much about America—and telling it. Zutkin always thought of how they had reached out after Trotsky. Lenin didn't get him (didn't want to, really), and if Stalin hadn't ordered him done in, God knows Trotsky would have been around arguing and still making mistakes. And Stalin knew it, Lev Davydovich Bronstein; somebody always knows what you are and how you are, exactly.

Max Reddick fitted no exact pattern yet. The reality of his girl's death might be good for him, Zutkin thought. A hard consideration, but the world was hard. He had a handicap; he was a bit petit bourgeois. Reddick never knew, except in passing through them and reporting on them, the horror of the ghettos Ames had known. Nor had Reddick, except for his time in the Army, really known the oozing horror of being a Negro in the South. Yes, in the end, the girl's death could rip the last ragged curtain of illusion from Reddick. A lot of white people were going to suffer at Max's hands because of that. That's why Zutkin wasn't going to the funeral; he could wait for his turn. He wasn't jumping in the front of *that* line.

[9]

NEW YORK

MAX REDDICK WAS NOT SURE if he was all wound up or all run down. He drank alone nights, sitting in a chair, thinking of nothing at all, it seemed, then suddenly becoming aware that he was thinking of it all, the whole brief life with Lillian Patch. Mornings, like a madman, he rushed from the house, fleeing before some prickling obligation to get for himself the kind of job Lillian had wished for him. The day came when, after stopping by the office of the NAACP, he was advised to register at the Urban League. When that was done, he drifted home, slipped the new bottle of whiskey from its brown bag and sat down in his chair. Now he had done all he could do, except report back to the *Democrat*, and what was the sense of that—now? This night Max sat on a pillow, for his rectum had started to throb with, he thought, all the drinking. But he was damned if he'd stop. He sat and waited for Harry's call, Harry's nightly call, the single touch of balance, the remembered thing, an origin, a point of departure or return. It came.

"You working, man?"

"No. Just sitting around," Max said, suddenly aware that he had been saying the same thing for a month and a half now.

"Did you eat?" Why the hell did Harry think eating cured everything? "I had a bite," Max answered, although he had eaten nothing since lunch when he'd got a Nedick's frank and coffee.

"Are you drinking?"

"Sure, I'm drinking. What did you think I was doing, jerking off?"

"Bad day, huh? Listen, did you work at all today?"

"No. I registered with the Urban League."

"Whatever in the hell for?"

Wearily, Max said, "A job, Harry, a job."

Harry said, "Oh, shit—listen, uh, goddamn it, Max, how long's it going to take for me to educate you to the way things are? Wake up. You're not their kind of Negro. That's an enclave man, a niche. If they've got a spot, they're going to slip it to some cousin or brother or some guy like *them*. You sure got a nerve, dragging your raggedy ass into the Urban League.

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This is 1947, Max, time for you to be alert! Tell you what: if them niggers come up with a job for you, I'll buy you a whole case of whiskey myself, but hell, don't you worry about that; my money's safe."

Max was trembling. He shouted into the phone, "Harry don't try to fuck up my mind like that, Harry, don't! What's the matter with you?"

A shocked silence of a long moment's duration hung like lead between them, then Harry said, "Max, I'm not trying to fuck up your mind. I'm trying to straighten it *out*, man, let you know where it *is*. I've known those fellows for years. I know what goes on, Max. Listen, I'm sorry, really sorry, but Max, you got to let this go. Get out of it. Write. Max, don't let them get to you. There's more than what shows and everybody's looking at the top. Get your crumbs together and meet us in Europe. I go to see the man tomorrow, the interview for the Lykeion. After that, it'll be getting near cut-out time. C'mon, Max. What do you say?"

Max stiffened against his trembling. "Europe. Harry, you're trying to straighten out my mind, but I don't understand yours. Why run to Europe? There are more white people there than here. They haven't built any ovens here *yet*; I keep hearing about concentration camps, but *I've* never seen one here. What is this, with all you niggers running off to Europe? Man, don't you know THEY STARTED THIS SHIT THAT WE'RE STUCK IN? DON'T YOU KNOW THAT, HARRY?"

"Okay, Max. The thing is, Europe is closer to Africa. Africa is where I'm aiming, Max. I know what's happened, and why. You got to cool it, man. Sounds to me like you're a little shaky. Want to come down?"

"No."

"I'll grab a train and come up."

"No, I'm all right."

"Can I say something to you without you blowing your top?"

"You've said everything else. Go on."

"You'd better knock off drinking alone. Get a broad, get that pussy, lots of it and maybe it'll pass. You got to try to help it. Max? Max, you listening to me?"

"I hear you, Harry."

"Do it, Max, go ahead."

"Goddamn it, Harry, I don't think I could even get it up. The blues got me and turning me every way but loose. I can't do anything. I don't want to do anything."

"You sound just like a white man, Max."

"Get up off me, Harry. I'm going to be all right. I'm going to be just fine. I'm going to be whole again. One day, you'll see."

"That's a deal?"

"Man, that's for real."

"Okay. And eat once in a while too, will you?"

"Yeah,"

"You sure you're okay?"

"Yeah. Thanks."

HARRY AMES HUNG UP, stretched and walked into the room where Charlotte was listing items they would have to take with them to Europe. "How is he?" she asked.

Harry sat on the arm of the chair. He liked Charlotte in horn-rimmed glasses; they gave her a settled look. "I guess he'll make it."

"You were shouting."

"So was he."

"Bad boys, both of you. I suppose you suggested that he get himself a girl or two?"

"Nah. Just told him to stop drinking so much and eat a little bit."

"Of course."

Harry bent forward to look at the list and Charlotte said, "I guess we'll have to get little Max's clothes a couple sizes too large. He can grow into them."

"Hell no. Buy things that fit." Harry was thinking of all the too-large clothes he had ever worn: socks pulled back under the foot half a length; pants rolled up two or three times, the tops pinned together to fit at the waist; the shoes packed in the toe with cotton or toilet paper . . . "Charlotte, you don't know what it does to a kid to have his clothes not fit properly."

"Insecure?"

"Yes."

"Then you'll have to make more money and we can buy brand new, two complete outfits each year. How about it?"

Harry rose. "Don't get smart. Just don't buy them so big that he gets lost in them."

"What's the interview to be like, dear?"

"I don't know. Didn't even know that there was to be one until I got the note. Kierzek said it was just routine."

"I like him."

"Who, Kierzek? He's all right, for an editor."

"You've had much worse."

"It'll be good for us, Charlotte."

"What?"

"Europe."

Charlotte lowered her pencil and said softly, "Yes, it will. The big break. But I do wish you'd mute some of this talk about Africa. You're not African, Harry." She bent back to her pad.

"But I'm black."

"Really. I always thought you were brown. You've deceived me, dear."

"You know what I mean." Harry had retreated to the kitchen. "Want one of these?"

"No, just water. You're not going to get me high tonight and take advantage of me." She smiled to herself.

"Why would a man have to get his own wife high?"

She laughed aloud. "Because it's fun sometimes." She paused. "Darling?"

"I'm getting the water."

"Yes, but put a little Scotch in it, will you, like a good seducer?"

HARRY AMES SAT DOWN ACROSS FROM THE MAN. "Tell me about yourself, Mr. Ames." The handshakes were over; it was time to get down to business. "I started your last book, but haven't finished it. I'm about halfway through."

Harry stared across at the man, Mr. Kittings, director of the Lykeion in Athens. *Tell me about yourself.* Something's wrong, Harry thought, but he talked carefully, watching Kittings' eyes. "I've not been a member of the Communist Party for almost ten years," Harry said.

"We're interested in your art, Mr. Ames, not your politics." Kittings nodded affably and Harry continued, uneasily. Per-

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haps it was a look in Kittings' eyes, perhaps in his tone of voice as he broke in to cover more fully some point in Harry's monologue. Whatever it was, Harry felt suddenly and shockingly that he was in hostile territory. He stumbled for a moment, trying to find some reason for his judgment, but he could not. He went on until he had nothing more to say. Then he asked questions about Athens which Kittings answered with a reserve that was not communicated to his secretary. She said, "Oh, you'll have a fine time there. We'll make the best possible accommodations aboard ship for you and your family." Why, Harry wondered, did he shoot his secretary such a sharp look?

The handshakes once more. "You'll hear from us," Kittings said.

"Hear from you?" Harry said in sudden alarm. "About what?"

"It is usually the practice for us to stay in touch with—people who—er—ah—come in for interviews."

Outside, on the way home, Harry thought it all very strange. Kierzek had said that the interview was routine. No one selected by the panel of judges had ever been refused admission to the Lykeion. Well, then, who was this prick, Kittings, to tell him he would hear from him? The decision was made! Seven of the best writers in America (Harry considered himself the eighth, now) had chosen him, Harry Ames, to receive the Lykeion Fellowship for the year. What in the hell had Kittings to do with it?

I'm cracking up. Just routine, like Kierzek said. Maybe Max is right. I'm into this thing too goddamn far. What did he say, Kittings? Nothing really. Maybe it was what he didn't say. But his eyes, his eyes? So? Maybe the bastard's just got naturally shifty eyes. Harry, man, ease up, eeease on up. By the time he arrived home, most of the feeling of foreboding had gone. It was going to be all right. The thing was, you couldn't distrust them *all* the time.

The sap of the earth began to run beneath the ground that Friday; spring teased the air. Windows that had been bolted against the winter were opened briefly. A few elderly people bundled themselves up and sat on the park benches, their pale faces lifted to the sun. Now the scarves of the students hung about the necks, and coats and jackets were left unbuttoned. Charlotte went out and was a long time shopping, but Harry understood; it was the kind of day he would have liked to go walking in, but he couldn't. There was too much to do: the inventory of the things in the apartment, finding a broker to handle the sublet, plus the writing. There had to be time for that.

When Charlotte came in, she handed Harry the square envelope marked, *The American Lyceum of Letters*. Harry took the letter without comment; he had not said anything to Charlotte about the interview except that it had gone all right. Charlotte went to the kitchen with the groceries. Little Max paused, wondering if he was going back out or was in to stay.

"Don't open it until I come back," Charlotte said. "Help him with his clothes. It's pretty nice out, but too much of this uncertain weather isn't good for him."

"C'mere, Max. Let Dad help you out. Attaway." Harry felt sad as he helped him out of his outer garments. He looked at the café-au-lait face and smiled. "Now come up here and kiss your old Dad. Big ones, now, Pow! How to go. Another. Pow! Pow!"

Charlotte was back, smiling expectantly. "All right, go into your room. Play. But go. Kiss first. Smack, smack. Bye-bye. Peanut butter and jam sandwiches coming up." She watched him go. "Open it, open it," she said, feigning extreme anxiety.

Harry passed a hand over his forehead and carefully broke open the flap of the envelope. His eyes raced down the short paragraph.

"We regret to inform you that another candidate, also recommended by the American Lyceum of Letters, was awarded the Fellowship in creative writing . . ."

There was more, but Harry's eyes swept back to:

"We regret to inform you that . . ."
"We regret to . . ."

Charlotte had moved to him, was crouching, one hand on his knee, ready to sit on the floor, but seeing his face, she paused, became motionless, awkward, half down and half up, and read his face once more, suddenly gone lifeless, suddenly fulfilled, invertedly, and she struggled upward, taking the letter from his dead hands and screaming before she started to read it, "My God, Harry, they did it, didn't they, they DID it!"

Harry rolled his eyes up at her. How painful it was to move them; he hadn't noticed that before. Charlotte's eyes raced along the letter. They were cold, her eyes, and a blue growing darker. There was a vast silence between them. It took a couple of minutes before Harry could begin to think. Another candidate? How could that be? The first letter said he had been *chosen*, selected, preferred; there had been congratulations. He, Harry Ames had been *the best*. Now he was nothing. There was someone else. What a fool he had been! Of course, he had seen it in Kittings' eyes as he had seen it in white eyes all his life. But *why*? They had had former Communists at the Lykeion. Clifford Jacobs, the composer, was Negro and had won a Fellowship in music there. Why? Charlotte, or rather, Charlotte and *himself?* Why? Did he have to be a faggot? Why, why, why? Would they ever tell him why? Could he find out why?

"Why?" his wife said.

Very carefully he said, "Charlotte, I don't know why."

"The Party?"

"I don't know."

"Us, you and I?"

"I don't know."

"But they said you'd been *chosen*!"

Harry didn't want to look at her face. "I know, dear. That's what they said."

"Well what do they mean, 'another candidate'?"

"Darling, really, I don't know."

Charlotte folded the letter along its original creases. "You said it wouldn't be easy."

"I guess I did. It's the kind of thing you'd say in our situation. The important thing—look, Charlotte—let's not hate each other . . ."

"But, Harry, I don't," she said with her eyes wide, her mouth held open. "Darling, I don't."

Harry nodded, but he didn't believe her. Even he, thinking for her in times of crisis, thought how nice it would be to have married a Jewish man or, at least, a white man. And why hadn't he, Harry Ames, married a Negro woman?

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"I don't want you to hate either, Harry," Charlotte said, for she knew that he too could think how much easier it would have been if he had married a Negro woman.

"No," Harry said, reaching for the letter. "They offer some consolation money. Let's take it and run."

"Whatever you say."

"It's not much."

"It would be hard, Harry. The children."

Harry sighed. "I have to think about it. Hard. The motherfuckers, the lousy, rotten cocksuckers, the bastards, the sonsofbitches, the faggots, the—"

"Harry," Charlotte said, thinking of the children, for although he was not shouting, he was speaking slowly, distinctly and clearly and without anger, with rather a kind of helplessness, a resignation.

"—the shiteaters, cornholers, hermaphrodites, pricks, assholes, cunts and cunteaters—"

"The children, Harry."

"Let them learn it from me. They should learn it from me. Why can't they learn *some*thing from me, like *pain*, Charlotte, *pain*!"

"Harry," she said, "Harry!"

"What!" he flung at her.

"It hurts us, too. It hurts like hell, you can't imagine."

Harry went to her and rubbed her shoulder. Goddamn it! They were almost out of it, almost. "Let me think about the other money. As soon as I can." He smiled. "They kinda took old Harry by surprise."

[10]

LEIDEN

MAX TOOK UP HARRY'S LETTER once again, but his mind stayed briefly in the past. It had been a kind of nutty life; a lot of highs and lows; a lot of people, and a helluva lot of water under the bridge. Nineteen fifty-four had certainly started a great many things for him. Now Max bent once again to the letter:

The disclosure of America's membership in Alliance Blanc would have touched off a racial cataclysm—but America went far, far beyond the evils the Alliance was perpetuating, but more of this later. For the moment, let me consider the Alliance.

African colonies were still becoming independent. Federations were formed only to collapse a few weeks later, like the Guinea-Ghana combine. Good men and bad were assassinated indiscriminately; coups were a dime a dozen. Nkrumah in West Africa vied with Selassie in East Africa for leadership of the continent. The work of the Alliance agents—setting region against region and tribe against tribe, just as the colonial masters had done—was made easy by the rush to power on the part of a few African strongmen. Thus, the panic mentality that had been the catalyst for the formation of the Alliance seemed to have been tranquilized. There was diplomacy as usual, independence as usual. What, after all, did Europeans have to fear after that first flash of black unity? The Alliance became more leisurely, less belligerent, more sure that it had time, and above all, positive now that Africa was not a threat to anyone but itself. Alliance agents flowed leisurely through Africa now, and Western money poured in behind them.

From a belligerent posture, the Alliance went to one based on economics Consider that 15 per cent of Nigeria's federal budget comes from offshore oil brought in by Dutch, British, Italian, French and American oil companies; consider that the 72 per cent of the world's cocoa which Africa produces would rot if the West did not import it. Palm oil, ground nuts, minerals, all for the West. Can you imagine, man, what good things could happen to Africans, if they learned to consume what they produce? It did not take the Europeans long to discover that their stake in Africa as "friends" rather than masters was more enormous than they could have imagined. Only naked desperation demanded that Spain and Portugal stay in Africa; the Iberian Peninsula hasn't been the same since the Moors and Jews left it in the 15th century. Time? It was the Alliance's most formidable ally.

In South Africa, the spark of revolt flickered, sputtered and now is dead. The Treason Trials killed it; oppression keeps murdering it, and those who say the spark is still alive, those successive schools of nattily tailored South African nationalists, who plunge through Paris, London and New York raising money for impossible rebellions, lie. The paradox, Max, is that, denied freedom, the black man lives better in South Africa than anywhere else on the continent; the average African. The bigshots—with their big houses and long cars, their emulation of the colonial masters—do all right. My friend Genet said it all in *Les Noirs*.

The Alliance worked. God, how it worked! And Africans themselves, dazzled by this new contraption the white man was giving them, independence, helped. Lumumba, disgracefully educated by the Belgians, was a victim of the Alliance: Olympio, dreaming dreams of federation, was another. Nkrumah and Touré have lasted for so long because their trust in the white man never was, and their trust in their own fellows only a bit deeper seated.

The Congo mess served as a valuable aid to the Alliance: it could test the world's reaction to black people in crisis. The Alliance was pleased to observe that the feeling in the West was, "Oh, well, they're only niggers, anyhow."

I could have foreseen that reaction; you could have foreseen it; any black man could have anticipated it. But then, "niggers" are embattled everywhere, ain't they, baby? Asian "niggers," South American "niggers" . . . But let a revolt occur in East Germany and watch the newsprint fly! Let another Hungarian revolution take place and see the white nations of the world open their doors to take in refugees—Freedom Fighters, yeah! Who takes in blacks, Pakistanis, Vietnamese, Koreans, Chinese, who?

But the picture began to change. It was quite clear that the Europeans had Africa well under control—and that was all they cared about. America, sitting on a bubbling black cauldron, felt that it had to map its own contingency plans for handling 22 million black Americans in case they became unruly; in case they wanted everything Hungarian Freedom Fighters got just by stepping off the boat. So, America prepared King Alfred and submitted it to the Alliance, just as the Alliance European members had submitted their plans for operations in Africa to the Americans. The details of King Alfred are in the case, and it is truly hot stuff. All this Alliance business is pretty pallid shit compared to what the Americans have come up with.

I should tell you that it was an African who discovered the Alliance and in the process came upon King Alfred. Who? Jaja Enzkwu, that cockhound, that's who. He stumbled on the Alliance the second year of its existence, while he was in Spain, which as you know has turned out to be a very hospitable place for exheads of African countries on the lam. Enzkwu didn't know what was going on; he simply sensed something, seeing a gathering of British, American, Brazilian, Portuguese and South Africans at San Sebastian in winter. This was where the Alliance held its second meeting. I'll tell you about Jaja. Any half-way good-looking white woman can make a fool of him (which was what was happening, for him to be at a summer resort in winter), but he doesn't trust a gathering of more than a single white man. About the white man, Enzkwu has a nose for trouble. But you know Jaja.

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[11]

PARIS

MAY 17, 1954! How they celebrated that day! They gathered at the cafe the morning of the 18th more briskly than usual, glancing searchingly at each other, the Paris, London and New York papers clutched nervously in their hands.

"Don't mean a thing."

"Looks like some very powerful shit to me, man. That 'with all deliberate speed' means just that."

"But you know Charlie and Miss Ann ain't going to sit still for that—their kids in the same classroom with black kids."

"Charlie ain't got no choice. The *Court* says YEAH!"

"No, man; it's got to be a fake-out."

"Wonder how they're taking the news back home. Max, write to us when you get back, hear? Goddamn these papers; I want to know what our people are saying about it."

"Those peckerwoods—there'll be another Civil War."

"Or a stateside Mau-Mau uprising."

"All right, let it come then."

"Yeah, with you three thousand miles away."

Laughter.

"Suppose it turned out to *really* be something?"

"And we didn't celebrate. Let's celebrate, because it might *start* a whole new bag back there. A whole new day."

"That makes sense. Sure, let's order a little taste."

"If it's the real thing, I might have to pack up and go home."

At the end of the celebration, which lasted two days, in and out of bars and cafes and restaurants, Harry had driven Max back to Le Havre. Max's leave was up; his book was finished. "When are you coming back, Max?"

Max countered with, "When are you coming home, Harry?"

"Never mind. Just put the blocks to them, man."

"You too, Harry."

Passengers pushed and shoved against them. "I probably won't be coming home at all. This is home now, for better or worse."

"Not ever? Not even now?"

"A man could raise hell there now, yes," Harry said. Then proudly, "But you'll all have to look back to me."

New York remained unchanged, a testimony to its strength against the minds of millions of people who leave it every year and expect that with their departure, something about it will change. When the ship had come into the harbor, he thought of the people he wanted to call right away. But once unpacked and having checked to see that his subtenant hadn't ruined the place, Max decided there was no one he wished to call that day, and he dug out the liquor he had hidden and fixed himself a drink.

NEW YORK

HIS THIRD DAY BACK, Shea invited him to dinner at his apartment. The apartment was in the upper floors of a new building on lower Fifth Avenue, and Max arrived in a belligerent mood. He had had a shoving match with the doorman who had blocked his passage and asked in a nasty tone who Max wanted to see; finally backed off and allowed him to get on the elevator. As soon as he'd shaken hands with Shea, he started to complain. Shea listened, his face flushing. He called downstairs and ordered the doorman to come up and apologize. "I don't give a damn what the house rules are," Shea said loudly. "When you see Mr. Reddick, you let him in without a word. You tell the other doormen too. If I have any more trouble like this, I'll have your head." The doorman flushed. He didn't know if this was one of the elaborate games the liberal tenants sometimes played or not. If it was, Mr. Shea played rough. If it wasn't, what the hell was he going to do if some nigger waltzed through the door and cleaned out the whole place? This one looks like every other one. The doorman apologized; he'd take the matter to the agent.

"Welcome back to New York," Shea said dryly. "You can see that things haven't changed that much."

"No," Max said. He sighed with relief. He had been so close to corking that sonofabitch right in the mouth, so close. Max looked around. Shea had a view of the Avenue down to the Washington Arch. He's done well, Max thought, very well. And here I thought *I* was raising hell in a couple of shabby rooms in Paris. Hell, I *was* doing better. Max had forgotten about the opulence one can find inside even an ordinary building in New York. If I had been white, he thought . . . Shea fixed him a drink. "Look, Max, we can talk about Paris and Harry after you tell me your decision about *Events*. We're most anxious to know. We expect things to start popping around here with the Supreme Court's ruling on desegregation. I'll be candid with you: we want Negroes on the *Events* staff. Sooner more than later, everyone's going to look around and find that they aren't clean; they won't be able to point to the South. We want to start with someone who knows the South, who knows something about the Negro mood, generally. I'm telling you this. At the office someone else would tell you something a little different, but it would amount to the same thing. Also in the future is a desk in Africa—maybe. This Mau-Mau business has us half expecting the whole continent to go. You'd get first crack at this if it came about. Now, you'd work out of New York, in National Affairs, but when you're on assignment, you'd work with bureau people in that area. You'll have to learn our systems, but that's a small problem. What do you say, Max? You can name your price."

Max named it. It came spinning off the top of his head, nudged by the doorman and Shea's current luxury; it had no basis in reality. Max looked boldly at Shea. His hair was the same gray; yet he seemed to be growing younger instead of older. The white boys get all the breaks, Max thought, knowing it was a thought to be laughed at. Max wondered how it was with women for Shea these days. He hoped he would have the good taste not to go into it, even if he got high. Shea nodded. "That's in the ball park," he said.

Max swallowed his drink. In the ball park? In the *white folks'* ball park! His father had had to work over five years to make what he was going to make in one. What was this, a welcome to the white folks' ball park? Max wondered suspiciously, what if I had asked for more. Would I still be in the ball park?

Max felt like an object rather than a new employee when he reported to Shea his first day. Max shook hands with at least fifty people, but remembered none of their names, only their titles: " 'Back of the Book' editor, books editor, you'll want to remember him."

Sure, Max had thought.

"National Affairs editor, Mannie Devoe. You'll be working

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under him. Photo editor; he'll assign photographers to you when you need them. News editor."

Six floors, Max thought, as he and Shea wound through offices and back to elevators and through offices again. Six floors and one black face. That wasn't true. Here and there, emerging suddenly from around doors and desks, he'd seen Negro women. They were researchers or research assistants. Max had seen three, but he had seen no black faces at the news desks. Oscar Dempsey, the editor, who wore colored shirts with bold stripes and white collars and neatly knotted ties, assured Max, however, that "with your reputation, you can count on a by-line occasionally. We know that it's one thing to have a college kid who isn't used to having his name stamped on what he's written, and another thing to have a novelist and newspaperman who's used to having what's his labeled."

Dempsey offered Max a cigarette. "Seriously though. I'm glad you joined us. This is more than an experiment, you know. It's what *Events* believes. We want qualified people of any kind here; the pace of the world demands it."

Dempsey did not like air-conditioning. His window was open and the street noise raced up the walls of the buildings and rasped into the office. Shea sat idly, toying with a cigarette. For Shea, Max thought, the fat was in the fire. The great democratic experiment had begun. If it flopped, *Events* would turn the hose on him. Max only half heard Dempsey tell his secretary to reserve a table for three at a French restaurant. Dempsey resumed talking about *Events* and its aims. I'm not a child, Max thought; I don't need the pep talk. A new white employee, Max guessed, would only see Dempsey from a distance or at a urinal in the men's room. Oh, well, it's a part of the program, when you invest that kind of money in a new Negro employee, a pioneer, a "first Negro first." And the Negro got his money in part because he listened to the boss. Big deal. *Events* hadn't even given him an application form to fill out in 1946. Now Dempsey expected him to be ten times better, cleaner and more honest than those he had been afraid to upset by hiring him eight years ago. Just because he was black. And they were sweating, Dempsey, Shea and Devoe. Paying good money to *sweat*. What dumb, poor, misguided, do-gooding bastards. Damned if I'd pay good money and sweat too, Max thought. You pay good money, ordinarily, so you wouldn't have to sweat. I'd sure as hell know what I was getting. And in spite of all that they must know about me, all of it; now they look at my skin and don't know what they're getting. White folks. Jee-*sus*!

The first editions of the magazines for the new year blithely predicted real outbreaks of violence for 1955. Max wrote a 300-line story about the desegregation scene for next fall, noting the hard-core resistance states and the few areas where compliance had been indicated by the school boards and the citizenry. On the whole, moving into spring, it looked as though the problem of desegregation would smolder for a long time and not be as explosive as Dempsey had thought. Then came Altea and the Reverend Paul Durrell and Max was quickly pulled off general writing in National Affairs.

Negroes in the small, South-like border town had attempted to secure from the school board a pledge for integration on all school levels for the coming fall. Now they were launching a city-wide boycott of the public transportation system and department stores. The first week the boycott stuttered, slowed and dribbled along, and there was spotty news coverage. Who'd ever heard of Negroes using a boycott as a weapon? But by the end of the second week, the Atlanta bureau chief called New York to say that the boycott was becoming effective. Streetcars passing through Negro neighborhoods were empty. Stores where the bulk of the Negro middle class bought were half empty on Fridays and Saturdays. The rednecks and country Negroes couldn't begin to take up the slack because they didn't make that kind of money; they were also used to buying in the smaller stores. The Altea Negroes had set up an organization, the Altea Advancement Group, and were cooperating with it 100 per cent. The streetcar company and mercantile losses were reported up to $75,000 going into the third week of the boycott, which was being led by a middle-aged minister, whose name was Paul Durrell.

In the *Events* meetings it had been decided that here was a new Negro leader, perhaps better fit for the times than the old ones guiding the quiet fortunes of the NAACP and the National Urban League. But Max realized that for Dempsey and Shea, Durrell was the old and comforting image of the Negro preacher as a leader.

Altea was a less than ordinary town. The road from the airport was lined with tall, slender pines, long and lean. The land was tufted with withered, scraggly hunks of grass, as though something in its history had trod its surface and left it restless and resisting the seeds that had been dropped into it.

Durrell wore a wide-brimmed hat and a genteel suit that could almost have been zoot. That almost put Max off; in Negro communities one saw and heard so much about Negro preachers that was both laughable and charlatanic. Durrell spoke with a soft upland Louisiana accent. A shade or two lighter and he could have gone *passé blanc*. He was a thin man of medium size and his face was sharply angled as if some Choctaw ancestor were breaking through. When he spoke, his words came slowly and deliberately and softly, as if belying some inner violence. Durrell called the men, whatever their ages, "brother." He called the women, old and young alike, "sister." He listened to the complaints of his people with bowed head, nodding once in a while, his face impassive, as if hewn from the meat of a buckeye. Durrell walked the streets with his people; he shared their car pools and joked with them. The older people, the ones used to having their preachers for leaders, idolized him; but the younger people, even though they were caught up in the boycott (it suited them and it was about time), were watching and waiting. They knew that generation upon generation of preachers had led their fathers and their fathers' fathers into dead end after dead end. They did not plan such an abysmal journey in their time.

Max wanted to be convinced that Durrell was all that he seemed to be, but inside him something persisted that said he was not. He couldn't pin down the feeling. He was conscious of waiting for something to happen.

Back in New York, Max buried his reservations about Durrell. Perhaps Durrell, like others before him, would fall by the wayside if he had the kind of flaw that could wreck the whole movement. But the search for a new Negro leader went on and Reverend Paul Durrell was being selected. Max knew this when Durrell was invited to serve on the board of the NAACP. If you can't beat 'em, join 'em, Max thought.

Quite by accident, he discovered that a new group had come to Harlem. The men wore neat dark suits; their hair, to a man, was neatly barbered and their shoes were shined. The

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man who was speaking to them looked vaguely familiar to Max that first day, but everyone called him Minister Q of the Black Muslims. It was in a way laughable at first; each orator tried to outdo the others with gimmicks—African robes, berets, tuxedos. The people said that Minister Q's bag was "super cool."

But with each successive Saturday, Minister Q was drawing the crowds away from the other orators who, cursing, would snatch the flags off their boxes and stuff them in their pockets and join the crowds swarming across the street to hear him. More and more people were doing more listening than laughing.

Minister Q was an untainted, pure African Negro such as is seldom seen in the United States today. Nothing Indian or white seemed ever to have touched his genes. He was all muscle and three yards wide; when he goes, Max thought, they'll have to make a special coffin for him. The minister was quick on his feet. Later he confided to Max: "When I was younger I could Lindy all night, wear out four or five partners. I could do everything all night—and did it." Minister Q was talking in his neat little office in the mosque.

Minister Q could have been the same age as Durrell, but he didn't look it. Now the Minister looked at him from across his little desk. "And you work for them, the white devils." He placed his broad, blunt fingers together. "May Allah be with you. May Allah watch over you."

Where Durrell employed fanciful imagery and rhetoric, Minister Q preached the history, economics and religion of race relations; he preached a message so harsh that it hurt to listen to it. Max saw the shamed faces of the men in the crowd Saturday after Saturday. The Minister would raise his heavily muscled arms that had driven opponents from one corner to another and bring them down on the rostrum like twin judo chops. The crowd would flinch.

The Saturday Minister Q first came to prominence, Max was in his street corner audience.

The Minister said: "Those white devils took away our history. They hid the records and lied to us. We have a history, but no white man is going to reveal it. We have to dig it out ourselves and the work is not hard, brothers. That work is *sweet*! Sweet to learn of old and mighty empires, of kings and princes of such influence that it reached into Europe where the white man slumbered in his Dark Ages. Yes! That's the way it was! When he woke from slumber he grabbed Africa, ripped us from her and with his profits—from slave profits—he began his industrialization. Europe was already in slavery, they didn't need Africans. A serf was a slave! A serf, I tell you, was a slave! So we came here. They raped our women and over the generations bent the minds of our children so that only now, today! are they beginning to grasp the truth about the white devils, of the society of his called America. Don't tell me about those white devils! There are no good white men! None!

"How many of you here," Minister Q went on, "own one single brick in the whole of Harlem? How many? Not a single hand, not a finger, and do you know, brothers, that is exactly why you're here this afternoon! And here are all the so-called Negroes in America getting excited about dee-segreeegation. Why, in Allah's name, *why?*" The Minister flung his arms outward in mighty protest. "We don't want to be with them! We want our own land. They owe it to us. They've bled you [powerful blunt finger pointing at the crowd], your fathers, your grandfathers, your great-grandfathers, your great-great-grandfathers, to *death!* Don't you know that this country is based on the labors of the black man? They took the strength and wisdom that was ours and ground it under cotton patches, forced it to open its legs under magnolia trees. Allah endowed us with wisdom, strength and goodness. What does that mean? Strength. Now, brothers, the time for goodness is past. Allah *knows* the time for goodness is past. Look at the mark of the white man around you: those cops with those cannons on their hips; look at your skins, brown, yellow, white, tan—where did all the *black* go? You know: it went in the bedrooms, on the slave ships, in the fields, in the big houses—" Minister Q paused again: no sweat ever came to his face; he might have been created around a cake of black ice. "I call now for black manhood. Dignity. Pride. Don't turn the other cheek anymore. Defend yourselves, strike back and when you do, strike to hurt, strike to maim, strike to—"

The crowd leaned toward him waiting for the word. But Minister Q smiled; he would not say it. He did not have to say it. His meaning was clear. "Allah," he said, "calls upon you to defend what is yours—yourself, your family, your dignity." Long moments after he had climbed down from the platform, the crowd stood motionless, then it broke into cheers.

That night on television Max heard the commentators:

"The leader of an antiwhite group, who calls himself Minister Q, today advocated the killing of white men . . ."

"Race hatred today reared its ugly head in Harlem . . ." Max laughed. How self-righteous they had become all of a sudden. White people didn't want to be hated; it was all right for them to hate, but to be hated in return, virulently hated —it stunned them.

[12]

NEW YORK

BERNARD ZUTKIN SAT IN HIS OFFICE. It was the same one, on the East Side, that he had been sitting in the day Max Reddick's girl was buried, years ago. The same kind of weather, too, Zutkin reflected. Time goes so swiftly, yet it always seems to stand still. One death, some suffering for Max, and fifteen years. In the scheme of time and the millions of people to choose from, that wasn't a bad price to pay for what Max was going to have handed to him. For some people the chance never came, not even to their succeeding generations. Max was ready now, like good, tough wood that had been seasoned in all kinds of weather. Time *was* a mystery; it prepared in so many dark, separate corners a variety of situations, but it always produced the right kind of people to meet them at precisely the right time.

He wiped his thick-lensed glasses with a handkerchief and picked up the phone. "Get Max Reddick, will you?" he asked his secretary in the outer office. He had tried to call Max last week, but they'd told him at *Events* that he was out of the country until this week. That was all right, Zutkin had thought then; the hurry was relative now, after all these years.

"Max, Max, is that you? Well, how are you? Yes, fine. You've become a world traveler. What were you doing in Africa? You don't say?" Zutkin paused to ponder this development; what he had to offer was still better. "I'd like to see you about something, Max. It's very important. As soon as you can. Lunch tomorrow? All right? Algonquin? That's fine, Max,

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just fine." Zutkin hung up, smiling.

The next day Zutkin watched Max enter the dining room. There was a very good look about him. The lines in his face had settled; in fact, they were his face now, and the beguilingly soft eyes. What they must have done to the women, Zutkin thought. Max had spotted him and Zutkin waved from his corner. He moved around the tables gracefully. What was he, Zutkin wondered, forty now? Forty-two or forty-three?

"Now tell me this business about Africa? I'm dying to hear it," Zutkin said, signaling for drinks. An African desk could be mighty attractive. Take a man like Max away, place him in a position to experience an entire new set of stimuli to which he'd have to give new responses, and you've got an exciting challenge. That could be worked out, though, for sure. Zutkin called for the second drinks as Max finished telling him about Lagos. Zutkin heaved himself up and settled down to talk. He grasped Max by the wrist. "What I have to say is important. I'm a little nervous."

"Man," Max said with a smile, "what have you got to be nervous about? You're white," and Max punched him playfully on the arm. Zutkin could not ever recall such levity about the man. It pleased him.

"Max, would you consider working with the President's speechwriters? The chance is yours. You're not a second or third choice. The President wants your help."

Zutkin could see that Max was stunned. He ordered the third round of drinks and they selected lunch.

"What do I do about my job?"

"Take a leave. Africa isn't going to vanish."

"For how long?"

"A few months, at least. It's important that the President get your answer and your talent as soon as possible. Max, what do you say? You know what all this means."

"What kind of speeches?"

"Civil rights. You know his platform. This way you may be able to nail what's there in solidly and squeeze in some suggestions for others."

Max nodded, slowly. "Will Dempsey give me the leave, do you think? You know, any President's only guaranteed four years, and I want that desk badly."

"I have no doubt that he'll give you the leave and keep the desk for you. I don't think you should worry on that score. These things work very smoothly and to everyone's advantage once they've been agreed on."

"You bastards," Max said. "You wring a man out. A guy can starve for ten years and then, suddenly, you want to give him everything. What's the matter with you people? Some guys die while they wait, don't you know that, Bernard?"

"I know, I know," Zutkin said. "I didn't make the rules; I only try to change the bad ones. I'm sure the President wants to do this too. He needs your help. How much time will you need?"

"Three days, and I want to talk to Dempsey myself."

"I can guarantee the leave and your Africa desk. See Dempsey tomorrow morning by eleven. He'll have a call an hour later. Can you see him at eleven?"

"Yes, but goddamn it, Bernard, I'll still have two days more to think about it. Don't rush me."

"I'm not rushing. Today's the first day, tomorrow's the second and day after tomorrow's the last day."

"Also, Bernard, I don't like the way you white folks have started to count these days."

Zutkin reached across the table in a kind of desperation. "Max, maybe now, *now* we can start to change this—" Zutkin groped for a strong enough word, "—mothafucking country for the better. What are you laughing at?"

Max had leaned back in his chair. He roared. People at other tables looked at him. Zutkin stared at him. "Didn't I say it right?"

"Baby, right on the button," Max said. "Right there, Bernard." He had never heard Zutkin curse before. "I'll probably do it, Bernard. I probably will."

"Can I congratulate you now?"

"If I can thank you now."

"You came to this on your own, Max. I only wish there had been something like it a long time ago. But then, you weren't ready for it."

"But I would give everything I have now, Bernard, just to have had a little then. Just *some*thing then."

"Times change," Zutkin said.

ALONE NOW WALKING SLOWLY back to work, away from Zutkin's massive, powerful although insidious optimism, Max's mind grew quickly dark with suspicion. Why me? he thought. There was Dallas. And he knew why not Dallas; he had a white wife. Max thought of the twenty-odd other Negroes he knew personally who might have been called for the job, but he also knew why they weren't.

What does Zutkin get out of it? There's *got* to be something in it. What? Here I am sitting on the best gig I ever had in my life and here *they* come with something a man just can't refuse. Playing a little bit of God, pulling strings on the President's mouth—although I hear that bastard likes to edit a lot. Don't blame him. I would, too. But what do they want, Zutkin and whoever else is in on this? *Nobody does anything for nothing.* They want something you've got. Or it's something you can do for them. Admire them, love them, adore them. It all goes back to the guy who is being generous: he wants you to think he's a great guy and you do. If you're getting, you better act like that. No, no, no. They want me to believe this country is going to turn around and reverse itself. But that's what they want me to believe, me, who knows better. A greater America. Now, we can do it. The good guys are in and the bad guys are out. Really? Didn't I just look at a file about a bunch of crackers cutting off a Negro's dick in broad daylight on a Birmingham street *and* throwing turpentine where the cat's dick had been? Don't I see a whole bunch of crap going down right here in precious little old New York every minute of the day? Goddamn them. They honestly do believe I'm a patriot, with my ass aching all the time now. I need to be somebody's damned patriot. The President and two million people like him can't change the way this sonofabitch is going—downhill without brakes. So, what's it going to be, Max, baby, Africa for good, huh? Europe, where they're starting to catch the disease? South America? C'mo[illegible]t, man. You don't know nothin' but hocks and beans and sirloin and greens; you don't know nothin' but hard pavement under your feet, traffic noises and the neighbors' hi-fis; you don't know nothin' but Catskill and Adirondack forests and Long Island undergrowth and how red the earth of the South looks; you don't know nothin' but all them black bones and all that

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black blood beat into the ground and all them niggers twistin' in their graves waitin' for one of themselves to walk into the White House and grab that Number One Mister Charlie by his ear to say, *Baby, we are tired of you cats fucking over us.*

Or words to that effect.

Max stopped at a bar and ordered another stinger. He drank half of it, then called Zutkin at home. "Bernard," he said. "What's in this for you?"

At home, Zutkin smiled. A little slow, but in another few hundred years Max would make a good Jew. "Ah, Max. What's in it for me? You mean what's really in it for me?"

"Yes, man, that's why I'm calling."

"Patriotism. You wouldn't buy that, would you?"

"Bernard, it's like this—"

"I didn't think so, Max. Money—"

"Bernard, I know there's no money involved. Look, almost twenty years of knowing each other through good and evil times. I have a right to know *why me?*"

"Jesus, Max. You really examine a gift horse, don't you?"

"Damn it, I gotta know if it is a gift horse or not. Besides," Max said, doggedly, "I want to know."

"It's very simple—"

"I'm listening."

"Are you listening carefully? Want to come over for tea?"

"No. I've got to get back. Are you going to tell me?"

"As I said, it's simple. We need each other. Got the picture? *We need each other.*"

"I thought it was something like that. I'm glad I called." Yes, there was always something.

"I wondered when you would."

"Bastard. You white folks are something else, Bernard."

"Sure. Listen. The tea is really good."

"I've got to go."

"It's simple, Max, but important."

"Yes, I know."

And I also know that I am not free and never have been. No, people don't do things for nothing; there's always something they want. Always.

He would have been freer on the Lagos desk, he told himself.

[13]

WASHINGTON, D.C.

IN SWIFT SUCCESSION Max saw Dempsey, Dempsey received a phone call from the White House, and Max found himself on a plane for Washington to see the President. He had almost walked into a trap, he told himself. He saw the Africa desk slipping out of his grasp, and his future in Washington unsure. Maybe he was all for the cause now, and in full accord with Zutkin's idea that they needed each other. But who knew about next week? He recalled the Negro who had served in the White House during the last Administration and how even the secretaries had refused to work for him. That man had been used very little; he hadn't been a good figurehead, for the Administration seldom trotted him out. This, however, was supposed to be a new era. He'd see. He'd asked for a leave of only five months to feel the new job out, and Dempsey agreed.

This Washington was new indeed. Perhaps it was because of the President, who rose tall and smiling as Max entered his office that afternoon. Max had seen him in person only once before. That was during the campaign when he held a rally on upper Broadway in New York. He seemed golden then with the summer's sun, and he smiled down at the housewives and joked with them; he reached over white people to shake hands with black people, all the while nodding his large, almost brutally square head.

Now, Max took the President's hand and could not help smiling. "Let's sit over here," the President said, gesturing to a couch with one hand and stroking his rib cage just inside his jacket with the other, as Max had seen him do many, many times on television. "How was your flight down, okay?"

"Yes, sir," Max said. "It was all right."

"You look bigger on the dust jackets of your books, Mr. Reddick. Is that calculated?"

"No," Max said with a smile, wondering which of his books the President had read.

"You come highly, very highly, recommended, Mr. Reddick. I have the greatest admiration for Bernard Zutkin. And Oscar Dempsey tells me that *Events* owes much of its preeminence in reporting civil rights to you."

"Dempsey had to be willing to gain that position, Mr. President."

"Yes, well, the coverage is good, quite good. I've had some journalistic experience myself, you know. Dempsey says you're free to join us, but that you have some reluctance. Now, I'm sorry to hear that, Mr. Reddick."

"Indecision is a better word, Mr. President. I want to do what I can to help—especially in this area. At the same time, I have to be concerned with my own future, my own work."

"What do you propose?"

"Dempsey has given me five months' leave. That ought to tell both of us about the future—whether you'll want me to stay—"

"I understand."

Max went on: "While I am honored that my friends thought enough of me to recommend me, and that you want me to be here, and while I believe in your program, staking what future I may have on someone else's four years is not the kind of gambling that I, as a Negro, can afford. That's the heritage of the lack of equal opportunity you've pledged to improve."

The President smiled and Max followed his eyes to the wide expanse of the White House lawn.

"I appreciate your loyalty to Dempsey, and I can understand your eagerness to be in Africa; it is a very exciting place—but we think Washington is, too. We can promise you vigorous activity for however long you choose to stay, and if you're the kind of man I think you are, that other people say you are, then I'm not worried—you'll be around long after your five-month tryout period." The President stood; the interview was over. At the door the President said, "Mrs. Agnew, my secretary, will get you set up across the street, and the other fellows, Gus Carrigan and Jim Bonnard, will take you in hand. We'll get together in a week or so."

Jim Bonnard was tall and thin; his elbows and knees seemed to pierce the very cloth that covered them. He had a cold, sharp sense of humor, and drank hard. He was an excellent writer, Max knew from his novels. Bonnard's face showed his drinking; his complexion was like yellow paste. Gus Carrigan was also tall and thin. He was dry and humorless and always enveloped in invisible scholar's robes. Bonnard, despite a

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thorough education, had remained a man of the street. Carrigan might have been cut from white marble—or ice. His eyes were made tiny by the horn-rimmed glasses that encapsuled them. He had a full head of dark blond hair; very little remained of Bonnard's brown hair. Carrigan's view was the long one, the highway of history, but Bonnard moved with the crises of the moment.

Carrigan turned to Max. "Well, how's it going?"

"It's all right," Max said, "but it would be better if I knew precisely what I'm to do and when."

Bonnard laughed.

Carrigan smiled. "When it comes, it'll come with a rush. In the meantime, I'd like to get your views on what's going on in the Negro community."

"My views?" Max asked somewhat incredulously.

"Yes," Carrigan said. His eyes never reveal anything, Max thought.

"All right," Max said, suddenly conscious of being on guard.

It was clear to Max that Carrigan was the boss of the writing team. Both men had been with the President since the start of his campaign. Okay, Max thought. His eyes roamed to the windows. He could see Pennsylvania Avenue and the tourists along the fence, Lafayette Square and behind it, St. John's church. My God, he wondered, do I really have to tell them the way it is on the other side of the tracks? Can they be *here*, in this day and age and *not* know something about the way it is? Yes, he could talk generally, pull together what the black man in the street was saying; that he could do.

The Negro community, he told them, expected the President to live up to his campaign promises to them. The community was tired, sick and tired, the phrase went, of candidates coming into the community, shaking hands and making promises they never delivered. Pressure was mounting already. Negroes believed he would do what he said, but too many whites were fearful that he would keep those promises. The President was going to have to do, or pressure would make him do. Negroes were tired of asking. The signs were obvious; a Minister Q does not appear unless there is a need, nor does a Paul Durrell, not to mention the others.

"Is Minister Q for real?" Bonnard asked.

"Just as real as Jim Eastland," Max countered. "He has the confidence of many a Negro—and there are more Negroes who agree privately with him than you can guess."

"And Durrell?" Carrigan asked.

"The middle class," Max said. "It's vocal and seems to represent everybody, but it doesn't. They're the people who with the breaks would become *upper* middle class, but the masses probably would remain just as they are today."

Three pots of tea and two packs of cigarettes later and Carrigan said, "Max, you've got to be kidding."

"Yes, that's pretty grim, what you've served up," Bonnard added.

"In the words of a sergeant I once had," Max said, "I shit thee not."

"Our sources don't paint the picture that dark," Carrigan said with a sigh.

Max said evenly, "You asked me here—as I understand it—to be a consultant and to help with speeches in this area. I've given you counsel, and will continue to give you counsel. I'd get moving on this thing while it's still relatively calm; once it starts up, it'll have too much momentum to stop without deepening the bitterness that already exists. I mean the President's got to start pushing packages through Congress *now*."

When Max left them, he had the feeling that he'd spent the time talking to walls.

On the day he had his next appointment with the President, Yuri Gagarin, in a five-ton capsule, became the first human being to make a space flight. The White House and the Executive Office Building hummed with the news. The Russians send up a bushel basket and we send up a grapefruit; they send up a man and we put up a chimp. The President must be on the phone right now chewing out those people on the space program. Bonnard, drifting lankly through the halls of the old buildings, stopped by Max's office. "You heard about the Russkies?"

"Yeah," Max answered. "Civil rights goes out the window this week, huh?"

"Oh, I don't know. You see the President this afternoon, don't you?"

"So far it's still on."

"Let's go to the press conference. What else've you got to do? We can get a bite after. The walk'll do you good; clear your head."

They walked briskly over New York Avenue to the State Department Building; once inside they made their way into an empty booth overlooking the auditorium. Max noticed at once that there were no Negro newsmen present. Everyone rose when the President came striding to the platform, followed by the Press Secretary, and took his place behind the podium with the seal of his office on the front. The President made three announcements, then the reporters began firing their questions. Was there the possibility of a Cuban invasion? The President answered with three negative statements and Bonnard nudged Max with his elbow. Max glanced at him, but Bonnard continued to look down into the auditorium. The President either answered or parried the questions. Someone asked about the White House News Photographers Association prohibiting the membership of Negroes. Max turned questioning eyes toward Bonnard; Bonnard nodded.

"But there'll be a lot of colored help on the plantation before the President's through," he said. At the conclusion of the conference, they cabbed to a restaurant on Connecticut Avenue. Bonnard said, "Max, you'd better not have a drink. The President doesn't mind it, but he doesn't approve of it, if you have an appointment with him."

"Thanks."

"Forget it. I'll drink one for you."

The President seemed preoccupied when Max entered his office. The room was bright and quiet, but it felt charged with tension.

"Come on in, Max," the President said. "What a day. What do you suggest we do to overtake the Russians?"

"Drink more vodka, Mr. President?"

"Maybe we've had too much already," he snapped. He gestured for Max to sit down, then he began a new conversation. "You know, every hour we have to judge things on their merits, and handle those with the most importance to our people. Some things must be first and others have to follow. We'd like to be able to handle all the important things at once, and handle them well. But we can't. In my judgment, civil rights—at the moment—does not come first. In fact, there is a bill going to Congress next month without my endorse-

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ment, because I believe the Executive Office has recourse to laws already in existence to alleviate the inequities in our society. That picture could change tomorrow, or tonight. I think you disagree with me, but that's what I want you to do. We don't need any yes-men around here; we haven't asked any to join us. I want you to behave as though civil rights is our most urgent problem. In that light, write what you think about it; I want memos from you every week; I want the closest possible cooperation between you, Jim and Gus. You are me in this instance, with all the checks and balances that are bound to the office of President, with the impetus or drag of public opinion included. See the leaders of the movements; talk to them. I want to know every change in their thinking. If something comes up that's urgent, call Mrs. Agnew and she'll get you back in here so we can talk about it. That's all, Max."

One week after the President had categorically denied the possibility of an invasion of Cuba in which American armed forces would participate, the Premier of Cuba announced that the rebel forces which had invaded his island with American help had been crushed.

AT FIRST MAX LIKED WORKING NIGHTS when the White House and lawn were lit and the Avenue almost clear of sightseers and pickets. Then Durrell discovered him; other leaders discovered him, and his nights were filled with dinners and talk. Max would look at them. They thought he had power, that his word could make the President turn his ear in their direction. They believed what the papers were saying—that it was a time of high drama. Youth and risk had triumphed over old age and dull security; that it was the start of a golden age. Of all the people he saw, Durrell disturbed him most; he had gone hippie, and Max thought that was to let him (Max) know that Durrell now considered him one of his better friends. He could not tell Durrell or the others then that he was not, could not do them any good, because the President's choice of action was clear and decisive; he could not tell them that any more than he could tell the President or Bonnard or Carrigan that he despised Durrell.

"When is the President going to do something, Max?" They all asked him the same question, and Max was torn between his loyalty to them and loyalty to the President.

The question was asked more often and in desperation the next month, when the Freedom Rides South began, five days after the Press Secretary announced that the President had refused to endorse the series of civil rights bills with provisions to speed desegregation and make the Civil Rights Commission a permanent body, because the President did not think it necessary to enact civil rights legislation at the moment. Max sat in his office waiting when the news came that two of the Freedom Riders' buses had been burned near Anniston, Alabama. Six days later, when rioting broke out in Montgomery after the Freedom Riders were attacked again, Federal marshals were sent to restore order. Carrigan summoned Max to his office in the East Wing.

"What's going on, Max?"

"You mean in Alabama?"

"Yes, yes, of course."

"I suppose it's a reaction to the President's not endorsing the civil rights package that went up."

"You can't be serious."

"Why not?"

"But there's already a series of laws providing for interstate travel without restrictions—"

"Obviously," Max said, "no one's bothered to enforce those laws. I mean, Gus, can't you see what's happening? If the President is relying on laws already on the books, these tactics —and they are tactics—are designed to prove to him that they are no good unless enforced by the Federal government, or unless new legislation is introduced and passed. That's what's going on."

"The Governor has asked for more help," Carrigan said, glumly. "Two hundred more marshals are going in tomorrow. And the President says he wants this settled before he goes to Paris."

"Am I supposed to tell the leaders this?"

"Max, I wish you wouldn't be quite so—so *truculent*. Where do your loyalties lie, just with Negroes or for the country?"

Max spoke in cold anger: "I have been trying to tell you what's good for the country. What histories do you read, Gus? Tell me about the history of the American armed forces, and I can show you how important Negroes were to those forces; tell me about the history of American economics and I can show you where Negroes made up the bulk of those economics by being poor or left out of them altogether; tell me about the history of religion in America, and I can show you where, as long as there have been Negroes in this hemisphere, religion has been an absolute lie; tell me about the history of American politics, and I can show you where American politics would be vastly different today if Negroes had had a real voice in them. Damn it, Gus, it's *you* who have vested loyalties. If I went out there and told those leaders—and I'm not, because I'm not going to be an errand boy for you or the President—to stop because the President *says* so, forget about Alabama, Georgia, New York—you name it, and forget about it—"

"Calm down, Max," Carrigan said. "I am sorry. I shouldn't have put it like that. I shouldn't even have said it."

"Man," Max said, "why don't you people use me? All my life I've fought like hell to keep people from using me. I came down here for you to use me, and you won't."

"Have patience, Max, patience. We know you set aside a lot to come down here. You've got to trust us; the whole machinery has got to move, not just one part of it."

"Yes," Max said. He stood. "Gus, I'm sorry. I guess we'll mesh. I want you to give a little and you want me to give a little. But I—and my people—have always been the ones to give. I'm trying to tell you, and I am serious, that they are tired of giving. That's all. Whatever I do here, that's the nut of my counsel."

Sullen and bewildered, Max sat moodily in his office or in his flat, seeing people when he could no longer avoid them. The summer's humidity crept toward the city and Congress was trying desperately to adjourn to escape it. The President had returned from Europe in a blaze of triumph. But Max sat awaiting the summons that never came. He was not disillusioned so much as convinced that only a racial explosion of unimagined proportion could move to action an administration which had proclaimed in ringing, iron tones that it was dedicated to the rapid attainment of civil rights. Max knew better now; the Administration, like the ones before it, did not know and could not understand what it was black Americans wanted.

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In June, a young Negro student named William MacKendrick had been accepted by the board of trustees at the University of Mississippi for enrollment. No publicity surrounded the event until the Governor of the state announced during a press conference that no Negro would enter Ole Miss as long as he was in office. MacKendrick insisted that he was going to enter. Some segments of the press called for intervention by the Administration, saying that now it could begin to live up to its campaign promises. But the President said nothing except that the matter appeared to be local.

Whenever Max's phone rang at home or at the office, he anticipated the question from the various leaders: "What is the President going to do, Max?" And Max became weary of saying he didn't know—however, the President was watching developments carefully, coming as they did on the heels of the Freedom Rider disturbances in Alabama. His memos were now being routed through Carrigan's office, then on to the President, but the only response he received for his notes on the MacKendrick affair was a "Thanks. Keep them coming," from the President.

Suddenly and without explanation, MacKendrick withdrew his application. The press said it was because he feared for his safety, but in the Negro community there were rumors that he had been forced to withdraw by the Administration. Max sent these rumors to Carrigan and when there was no response, he went to his office.

"I don't know how those rumors got started, Max. There's simply nothing to them."

"I'd better talk to MacKendrick, then," Max said. "He hasn't said anything directly about it."

Carrigan nodded. "That's a good idea."

Max tracked MacKendrick to New York, where he had gone to give a series of lectures under the auspices of the New Pan-African Movement. They arranged to meet at Max's apartment. MacKendrick was a small man, and like so many Negroes, had a mixture of white and Indian blood flowing beneath his heavily bronzed skin. His voice was soft and his accent filled with gentle valleys and hills. There is no accent quite like that of a Mississippi Negro; its cadence is French, its emphasis Spanish, its heritage seventeenth-century English with the unsteady lilt of Irish and Scots thrown in.

"Mr. MacKendrick," Max said, "I'd like to find out what happened in Mississippi. I noticed tonight at your rally you directly accused the President of interfering with your attempts to get into the University."

MacKendrick was a bit old for a freshman, about 21. Working and studying to overcome the inadequate teaching in the Negro high school he had gone to, and trying to get together a little cash to hold himself together the first semester. Now that was all shot. Now the young man was waving aside the drink Max offered him. "Mr. Reddick, they tell me you work for the President. You're one of those big colored gentlemen that don't have anything to worry about." MacKendrick's smooth face broke into a smile.

"That's right," Max said. "I work for the President, but what you tell me may determine just how much longer."

MacKendrick grinned once more. "Whose future are we going to talk about, yours or mine?"

"Both our futures, Mr. MacKendrick."

"Well, Mr. Reddick, I hate to disillusion you about our head of state, but I was asked by a man from the U.S. Attorney General's office not to enter the University because the Administration was afraid my move did not fit its timetable for attacks against the desegregation holdouts. I was also told that it would be embarrassing for such a conflict to come up so early in the President's time in the White House. This man made me a promise—if I held off until next year, they'd see me into the University, whatever it required. Now, Mr. Reddick, I'm a little man, just an ordinary citizen, and maybe not even that because I'm black. But I spent a lot of time studying after my graduation to be able to enter that University without scholastic difficulty. And I had to earn some money so I wouldn't *look* as poor as I am. But I'm intelligent enough to know that we do have some laws on the books that say I *can* go to any school I wish. I told that man if the government wasn't ready, I was, and he went away. It's taken me two years to get six names of Ole Miss alumni; that's what the University requires. Oh, I found them, reconstructed, living outside the South. But the Attorney General also found them, with a helluva lot less trouble than I had. They were asked to withdraw their names as references and five agreed. I withdrew because I couldn't get five new names in time for the start of the summer semester."

"You can prove this, of course?" Max asked. He watched the youth as he opened his attaché case and brought out copies of letters each of the five references had sent him.

"These are copies," Max said. "Can I have them?"

"They're yours, sir."

"And now what do you do, Mr. MacKendrick?"

"I'm going to try for the fall semester without the references. I wanted to do it their way, but that didn't work out. Now, I have to do it my way."

"You'll be in a lot of danger, you know."

"If you're black, you're always in danger. More danger when you've placed some faith in an Administration that double-crosses you."

The Golden Age, Max thought later, had not yet arrived. The Administration could easily deny MacKendrick's charges. And a terse denial meant to the careful, clever newsman at the Presidential press conferences that he wasn't supposed to ask questions. If he did, his hand probably would never again be recognized by the President and the nameplate on the back of his chair as good as removed. Max believed that the Administration people did not think themselves ready for the desegregation battle, but *when*, millions of people were going to ask, when would it be ready?

"What did he have to say?" Carrigan asked, when Max returned to Washington.

"His grades, they tell us," Bonnard put in, "were completely shot."

"His grades were all right," Max said. "My information is that the Attorney General did indeed ask his references to withdraw and five of them did."

Carrigan toyed with a pencil. "Max," he said, with a sigh, "it's true that we did learn about MacKendrick. His grades, for Mississippi, were all right, but we didn't want to run the risk of a confrontation with the Governor and then have the kid flunk out of school—"

"Why is it that no one seems to mind that millions of Negroes are failures because of the way they have to live in our society, and everyone minds that, once a Negro decides to buck the society, he forfeits the right to fail?"

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"Because it's more than one person, one Negro. If we are to help the mass, the people we help have got to be, and consistently so, winners."

Max said, "Then you knew all along. I don't have to let you see the copies of the letters MacKendrick gave me."

Neither Carrigan nor Bonnard spoke.

The facts spoke for themselves, now. The Administration deliberately and successfully subverted the lawful attempt of a citizen to enroll in an educational institution of his choice. A Constitutional violation by the people entrusted to uphold that Constitution.

"Gentlemen, you place me in a most awkward position," Max said. "You have no confidence in me and I have none in you. You can't imagine how sorry I am."

"C'mon, Max," Bonnard said. "We can straighten this all out."

"Yes, we made a mistake, a real boo," Carrigan said. "We're bound to make mistakes in this business. Human error."

"But that was some mistake," Max said. "MacKendrick plans to enter for the fall semester, anyway, without the references. If people lose playing according to the rules, you've got to expect them to ignore the rules after a while. Do you know what's going to happen to him? He'll go it alone. If they let him in, one of those Mississippi mobs will kill him. On the other hand, maybe as soon as he registers the sheriff will arrest him, throw him in jail or into a crazy house. Could be that they'll hang him and say he committed suicide. You know the stories, or don't you? Black Americans know the stories, all of them."

Carrigan said, "It's been a bad time: Cuba, the Russians in space, and now this. We've made mistakes; we've underestimated people, but our efforts have been honest and history can't condemn us. I know the President is sincere in wanting to keep his promises to American Negroes. But he's got almost a complete term left and when he makes his move, he wants to lock it up, not lose. You know that sometimes the individual has got to be sacrificed for the group."

"Look," Max said. "I've heard these arguments all my life. In fact, I don't think there is a black man in America who hasn't heard them." He spoke sharply now. "I vote no confidence in this Administration, as of now."

Carrigan rose. "Wait a minute, Max. You—"

Max said, "I have another month to serve. If you want, I'll serve it; I don't want to embarrass anyone, you'll get enough of that. If not, I can leave today."

Bonnard said, "You're a rotten sport, mister."

Max spun on him. "Sport? This is not a game, Jim, or don't you understand that yet?"

Bonnard flung out his hands. "It's all game, that's what it is."

Carrigan glared at him.

At the door Max said, "Then you'd better come on over where the big kids are; they play big kids' games, and I don't mean stinkfinger."

TWO DAYS LATER he took a late plane from Washington, threw his bags and briefcases in a corner, stripped and piled into bed. It was all over; Washington, the Golden Age, was behind him now, but all the whiskey in the world could not remove the taste of it; the gold had turned very suddenly to brass.

When the phone rang, Max opened his eyes to the false dawn of New York. The low, steady hum of his air-conditioner provided an undercurrent of sound against the insistently ringing telephone. Who could be calling? A woman? He wasn't up to that. Not at the moment. He picked up the phone and said gruffly, "Hello!"

"Hello, Max. What's going on?"

Him. He hadn't got the word, then. "Trying to sleep. What are you up to?"

"Just got in town. In Washington they said you'd come up here for a few days. I'm here trying to get my brothers to give me some money, but I wanted us to get together for a quiet little dinner tonight."

The Reverend Paul Durrell, still coming out of his raggedy bag, Max thought. He had always tried to keep their conversations on a more formal level. "Paul, I just got in from Washington, and I need some sleep, and I'm going to be tied up for a little while—"

"Max," Durrell said in a patient voice, "you know you can find the time."

"I can't do you any good, Paul," Max said, leaping ahead to the meat of the call. "Not anymore."

"Brother Max, I'm afraid I don't understand."

"Paul, for four months you and every other so-called Negro leader have been wanting something from me. But I've quit. I'm not in the White House anymore. I can't help you, and I hope I never have."

"Brother—"

"Save that brother shit for the others, Paul," Max said angrily. "Why do you work so hard to get me to *like* you? Why have *I* got to be in your pew? The white boys are in your corner. Baby, *what have you done?* I don't like you; I think you're dangerous. The whole movement is tied to you and it can go right down the drain if . . . I don't know, man. You behave like a man who might have a lot to sweat about. *I don't like you.*"

"Max, why are you so *bitter* toward me? It wrings my heart to hear these things from you. And why do you keep saying the white press is protecting me? Scurrilous, Max."

"Then sue me, Brother." Max hung up.

Durrell never really needed Max. He had grown so in prominence with his marches and demonstrations, that he had been given a private line to the President's office. A gesture, and very typical of the golden age. Max got up, pulled on a robe and drew bath water. While it was running, he put up coffee. He had two letters from Margrit that he hadn't yet opened, and there were the papers to read in the tub while he relaxed and drew out the vague pain that now seemed always centered around his anus. Nerves again. Washington had done it. But perhaps, later in the day, he would feel up to breaking the news to Zutkin.

Zutkin answered the door and stood a moment, closely studying Max's face. Max even felt his eyes on his back when he preceded Zutkin into the study.

"You look drawn, Max. The weather. Yes, the weather's been terrible here, too, of course. It seems to get worse every summer. Well, let me get you a drink and you can tell me about the President."

When Zutkin returned with the drinks, Max said simply, "I've quit, Bernard."

"Ooo," Zutkin said. "You'll tell me why, of course?"

"Of course," Max said with a smile. "You, I'll tell."

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"I've heard nothing about it."

"Now you'll hear, Bernard, and I'm sure that what you hear from other sources won't be quite like what I'm going to tell you. The MacKendrick boy in Mississippi—"

"Washington was hands off on that, right?"

"Wrong. Hands on, all the way. The Attorney General, with the President's knowledge and consent, forced five out of the six references needed for admittance to withdraw their names."

"But why?"

"The Administration wasn't ready for a confrontation."

Zutkin forced a twisted smile. "But you must be kidding. You've got to be."

"No, Bernard, I've quit. I'm not kidding. Why in the hell would I joke about a thing like that?"

"There's got to be a deeper reason."

"Why? This one's deep enough, but not so deep that it doesn't stink."

Zutkin looked down into his glass. "Can you imagine being upstaged by a twenty-one-year-old kid?" He did not expect Max to answer, and he continued. "What did the President have to say?"

Max shrugged. "I tried to see him for two days, then gave up. I don't think he wanted to see me after my conversation with Carrigan and Bonnard. Look, I'm sorry it didn't work out. I thought it would, I honestly believed it would go well. But, they never used me, Bernard. Four months there and I helped to write not one speech. The extent of the President's civil rights activity was to send a telegram to the Civil Rights Commission; he refused to endorse a package of bills and now this MacKendrick thing. I think he believes that by having Negroes on his staff, and filling Washington with them—in government posts, not as residents—he's improving the picture. He's right, the picture has lots of colored folks in it, but that isn't getting it at all."

"I suppose I knew the man had this in him all the time," Zutkin said. "He's a *politician*, and it's a politician's habit to manufacture his own best image. Yes, there were signs along the way. But I hoped. And I knew you hoped. Everybody did. He came into power and you have to work with people who are in power."

"I know all that, Bernard. We *survived* by knowing exactly where power seemed to be every second of the day. If you're black you know that every white man thinks he has power over you and, ergo, he has, until you kick his tail for him."

"Dangerous," Zutkin was saying, as though he hadn't heard. "Say a man does have good intentions, but bides his time; is evil ever inactive, no. Say then that the danger might be not in waiting to express your good intentions, but not having any anyway, beneath the surface, running deeply. Then you can't use Nietzsche anymore; you've got to go to the old master, Niccolò, and appear to be just what the time demands, while you actively but quietly pursue what you think you ought to be, which might not be to the liking of the people, or great numbers of people."

"Well, I'm out of it, Bernard."

"Nobody's ever out of it, especially not thinking people, and besides that, we still need each other. Perhaps even more than before."

"They're grinning at us and setting us up," Max said.

"Maybe so. But one always hopes. Maybe the showers are really showers, you tell yourself, after seeing a thousand people go into them and never come out. You've *got* to believe they're real."

"What do you mean 'got' to believe when they've already proved how wrong you are. Never mind *that;* the solution is, you fight when the time is right."

"And get slaughtered, is that it?"

"Where's the choice, Bernard? Look at the Indian. He fought *past* the right time; he was half believing in the white man. Look where he is now."

Zutkin said, "The right time and the right place. Who picks such a time?"

"Haven't we been trying to pick it, but for a more genteel kind of fight, and haven't we learned that there exists no substitute for a fight but a fight?"

They sipped the last of their drinks in silence. Then Max said, "Bernard, do you know we really can tear up this country? I mean it, and *now!*"

Dryly, Zutkin said, "And then what?"

Max grinned. "Beyond that, whew!"

Zutkin sprang up. "Exactly! All they want is the excuse, then they'll get it over with, those Emma Lazarus poor, sprung from the vomit of steerage and who, still unable to speak English, believe in white supremacy." Zutkin shook his head. "And then there won't be any more race problems, because there won't be any Negroes. And when they finish with you, the chances are quite good that they'll start on us. Bloodlust is like a natural disaster; it has to run its course. I have seen their faces; they are faces out of nightmares—most ordinary—so ordinary that you can't believe the brains behind them capable of genocide."

"Maybe we'll be dead by then," Max said.

"I've never known you to be an optimist, Max."

[14]

LAGOS

THE HUGE JET, SPARKLING SILVER-WHITE in the sun, lowered itself gingerly out of the sky and touched down at Ikeja. Max looked out of his window at the taut green of the landscape, green coated with light red dust, hard, scarlet patches of earth. The airport building was unchanged. It was low and ugly and shabby. Upon its faded white side LAGOS was painted in large, elongated letters.

Max had spent three exhilarating and yet in some way disturbing days with Margrit in Amsterdam. Disturbing because he could no longer see around her; her image, voice and postures filled every corner of his imagination. And for the first time he had truly examined, even while racing away from them, the prospects of marrying a woman who was white.

He had also spent one day with Harry in Paris. Harry had been tired, bitter and querulous; almost boring. Now, here was Max back in Africa, thousands of miles away from the plush jobs he had been offered finally by the whiskey and beer companies. Those offers always came for Negroes if they'd been anywhere near the White House. Such a Negro would lend prestige to the matter-of-fact exploitation of the Negro market.

In line before the desk of the inspecting health officer, Max noticed a flurry of expensive agbadas and an escort of soldiers. He saw His Excellency, First Minister to the Premier, Jaja Enzkwu, at the center of all this attention, walking as solemnly

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as an emir from the north. Enzkwu deigned to look at the line of incoming people and saw Max. Quickly, he dispatched a soldier and an aide to talk to the health officer and fetch Max to him. Max walked over and extended his hand, but found himself in a perfumed abrazo, fighting his way through the folds of fine cloth of the agbada. "How good it is to see you, brother, Max," Enzkwu said. To his circle, he said sternly, "It is our Afro-American brother, Max Reddick, who is an aide to the President—" Enzkwu raised a finger and everyone's attention went to it "—the President of the United States."

"Ahhhh-haaaa," the murmur went up. Enzkwu smiled as if to assure all that he knew only the most influential people.

"There was no one from your Embassy to meet you? Strange. And are you on a mission for your President?"

"Oh, no. I'm no longer with the President. I'm back with *Events*."

"Oh! A journalist once more, is it?" Enzkwu's eyes flashed disappointment, but he stumbled on. "Ah, yes! *Events*! That is a very important magazine. Some of your ambassadors here in Africa have been journalists."

"Yes, that is true," Max said, but thinking, only the guys from *Look*.

"This officer will see you directly through customs," Enzkwu said. He leaned close. "I am on my way to Paris at the moment. Naturally. You have seen Harry and he is well?"

"Yes, Jaja—Your Excellency, and thank you."

"Don't mention it. When I return next week, I will ring you up at the Federal Palace, of course, yes?"

"For the time being."

"Then we will have a very good time. Goodbye. Welcome to Nigeria once more." Enzkwu winked, then, with his entourage, moved toward the exit.

Outside, Max bargained with a Yoruba taxi driver who had tribal markings on his face and wore a striped, soiled agbada. Two pounds. They pulled away from the airport and raced down the left side of the road, for Nigeria was superbly British, through Ikeja, Ebutu Meta, where the traffic began to converge heavily, and through Yaba. Small stands hugged the dusty, narrow roads, and women, mostly, sat beside them, waiting with smiling patience for the passerby who wished to purchase one or two cigarettes, a stick of chewing gum, a penny candle or a piece of copra. Other women swung down the road, their infants tucked into their skirts behind them. The mammy wagons, always overloaded with shouting, gesticulating people, spurted by: roadside drinking places played loud High-Life music. Entering the Lagos traffic, they crept past the Bristol Hotel on St. Martin's Street, down past Kingsway with its display windows filled with brown mannequins, past which surged the mobs of shoppers, waiting houseboys and drivers, beggars, and sellers of gold watches and postcards and women for later in the evening. They turned onto the Marina. The harbor was filled with ships riding at anchor. There was a slight haze because of the humidity. Max sat back smoking and watching the street scenes. Now they cruised past the Shell-B-P Building, Barclays Bank, the new Post & Telegraph Building, the powerful statue of Shango, Yoruba god of iron, with his short sword thrust toward sky and sea. Finally, they curved off the main road onto the spacious grounds of the Federal Palace Hotel. This would be home for a few days. Max climbed out of the taxi and three young bellhops raced to take his bags.

He took a room at the rear of the hotel. It overlooked the lagoon and channel through which the great ships passed slowly on their way to the harbor at the foot of the city. It was quieter in the back; here there were no chattering drivers waiting for fares from the hotel to fill their green and black cabs. Max stripped and showered. After, sitting in shorts (he hadn't turned the air-conditioner on yet), he made an appointment to see the house on Rumens Road and the office on Broad Street the next morning. Then he wrote a letter to Devoe in Nairobi. Max wasn't in a hurry to open the lines of communication; a letter would do for now. At dinnertime Max went downstairs to the spacious dining room and took a table on the open terrace. As usual, there were twenty white persons for every black person. The whites generally got better if not first service and Max felt the old irritation with Africa coming on. Patience, he told himself. *Cool*. When he had finished dinner, he returned to his room and pulled off his jacket and loaded his typewriter. He was half a hundred pages into a new book, but he had no publisher now; his previous one had dropped his option. Another publisher, however, had made Max an offer, but that had been quickly and mysteriously withdrawn. Then Max discovered that Marion Dawes had signed with that publisher and he understood. The publisher had his nigger now; nearly everybody had one. The season for that sort of thing. Max was quite determined that this would be his last book. There was a little money put aside, thanks to the really quite adequate soft cover book money in circulation. With it he could buy a little shack in New England, perhaps, and do nothing but hunt, read and walk the woods. But would Margrit like that kind of—

Max jumped up. He had to do something about this Margrit thing. It was one thing to sleep with white women, but quite another to marry them. He was too tired and much too wise to be put through the paces they set for you in such a marriage; he didn't need that at all. Something had to be done. A letter tomorrow. To Margrit. Max pulled on his jacket and walked quickly out to the elevator. Yeah, he knew what to do. He signaled a cab when he got downstairs and took it to the Kakadu Club in Yaba. There were always girls at the Kakadu, girls and white folks trying to do the High-Life. The High-Life was not an intricate dance; it was a shuffle, but you could improvise on it.

[15]

AMSTERDAM

MARGRIT LOOKED ONCE MORE at the clock. She had left the gallery at noon, sure that Max would be calling her shortly after she got home. What was so important in Leiden that she could not have gone with him this morning? She knew he was very ill. It was in the way he talked, biting every word, and in the way he held his body, as if to ward off pain. At one-thirty Margrit made herself go downstairs, leaving the silent telephone. She went down step by step, slowly, holding the handful of dried bread crumbs which she threw into the canal for the ducks. Then, just as slowly, she ascended the stairs, listening intently for the ringing of the phone which never came. She called Roger, but he wasn't home or was not answering his phone. And she called Max's hotel. Now it was two o'clock and the

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time weighed heavily upon her, like the taste of brass lingering in the mouth.

For the third time she went to her bedroom and looked at herself in the mirror. She wanted to look good for Max, show him what he was missing. Who could tell what might happen? The hips, to her disgust, were extending to a wide curve, hips he once had dug his fingers into to draw her all the way to him, belly to belly. Her legs were getting heavier and the varicose veins in them more pronounced. Deep lines sat at the corners of her eyes and only folded neatly into the skin when she smiled. How could that be when she hadn't smiled for such a long time, it seemed? She returned to the front room and gazed blankly out at the canal. She had not got used to it after all, as she had thought she would when she returned from New York.

Almost three years. What did it matter if it were two or three months less? Three years with Max, New York. America, and now she was back, still tied to Max in a way she could not explain. Maybe he had more to tell her than he had so far. Some explanation for the breakup. She knew that he knew sorry was not enough; there had to be more and she was going to find out what it was.

The three years had passed so quickly and in such a flurry of people and places, that she hadn't yet recovered. She awoke sometimes at night thinking she could hear the Seventh Avenue subway train racing beneath the building, drowning out Max's snoring; and sometimes she thought she could hear the high-pitched, desperate, forlorn calls of the faggots to each other as they emerged from the Riker's diner to go home alone. But awake there were only the soft night sounds of Amsterdam, nothing else, and those made her think of Camus' *Le Chute* and the meetings on Amsterdam's bridges.

What had happened? She had been so sure.

A child might have helped, a tan child, but there had been no children. Every month the menses came in spite of the furious, exhausting orgies almost every night, for he had got over the bilharzia, and he saved strength from the job and the book—his last he had said—for her, like a dessert.

After a few months spring came with its pitiful little green shoots to hide some of the dirt of the city, and she started to work in a gallery not far from their apartment. All the paintings had been bad, very bad, but it had been something to do.

Late one fine spring night, when they could clearly smell the rivers for the first time and she was feeling settled and very much a part of his life, she kissed him suddenly on a corner where many people were milling around a newsstand for their papers. He (she felt it keenly, like a rebuke) submitted, and they walked on in silence until he said, "Maggie, for Christ's sake, I don't like to be kissed on the street."

"I forgot, Mox."

"Well, try to remember, will you?"

"Why does it make you angry when I kiss you on the street?"

"Never mind. Just don't do it."

Something had drained out of her then and had been replaced by a furtive guilt. She had started to take his arm, but changed her mind.

The weekends they had spent in the woods near Brattleboro or East Hampton, walking and fishing. And taking target practice with a .22 rifle.

"But Mox, you know I don't like guns."

"Learn to shoot it. One day you may be glad you did."

There had been a look in his eyes that urged her to find the answer in her own soul, so he would not have to soil the air with the words. The rifle was in her hands, walnut and steel, and his hands gently set her arms and legs.

"Now, squeeze, squeeeeze . . ."

"Bam!"

"Again."

"Bam!"

"Once more."

"Bam!"

The noise startling the still woods, Max down at the target, smiling. Had he been trying to tell her that one day her life might depend on whether or not she could shoot a gun?

"Squeeeeze, Maggie."

The lessons had been conducted calmly, even a little sadly. "It's a question of dignity, Margrit." That statement when he had finally taken the gun from her, after each lesson, to clean it.

Summer came and with it the trips to St. Thomas, Puerto Rico and Mexico.

St. Thomas with its jungle smell, its iodic odor of the bright, blue sea, bluer than the Mediterranean, the long swims in it, his kissing *her* in public, feeling her up under the water, a stroking hand pausing lightly on her *poesje*, a flat hand pressed against her breasts, a mock horselike mounting in ten feet of water . . . and dinner that same night, candlelights dancing in the heavy, humid breeze, the steel drum band playing softly, the air filled with the scents of a hundred jungle flowers, and her not noticing anything until he had tipped the table getting up quickly, breaking the top of his glass and wheeling on a group of American sailors with it in a single, frightening motion, a group of sailors who were fanning out around him, sailors there to pick up the women who came alone, wanting to be picked up . . . and she, with her drink wet and sticky in her lap, heard the band struggling on, and she did not know, did not understand what had created this ominous, ugly tableau which dissolved finally with the presence of still more sailors with a yellow SP on their sleeves.

"What happened, Mox, what were they doing?"

And his eyes: accusing, his eyes incredulous that she had not seen or heard or understood.

The next morning they did not play in the water together. He swam alone a long distance out and back and then went to the bar for a martini. It was not even ten in the morning, Margrit remembered.

Puerto Rico with its brave gloss and terrible slums below the cliff, facing out to sea, between the forts. They went to the old city for dinner and stopped at the bar of their hotel for a nightcap, St. Thomas almost a memory. The bar was filled with people; the music was cha-cha-cha and behind them the dancers whirled and posed on the floor. Puerto Rican Spanish was rising and falling around them. "*Arriba*, *'rriba*," and she heard Max say to her quite calmly, "Move your stool back just a little, Maggie." And she had followed his gaze to the drunk American who was gesturing angrily with his thumb toward them, noticing too that the bartender was frowning at the drunk, then smiling at them. "It's waxed." Max again, sliding his foot on the floor, and she just started to understand that Max was watching the American, waiting for him to make a move, say a word; waiting, Max was, like an executioner who knows the job must be done; she remembered the fright

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she felt and how she started to pluck at Max's elbow. "Stop that." He was going to place it all in jeopardy—what he was, Max Reddick, what it meant to be Max Reddick—because of a drunk white American.

"He's drunk, Mox."

"Not too drunk to open his big mouth: move over a little."

Her eyes were drawn to his eyes and she did not know them. Desperate, she stood, threaded her way a few feet through the dancers and stopped, obviously waiting. There was one agonizingly long instant when their eyes met, and she had put her mind to leaving the room alone, defeated, when he slid off the stool and came after her.

"Mox, you would have fought him."

"Maggie, I would have killed him."

The hall had tile floors and their heels sounded loud upon them. She felt sick, like vomiting. "I am going to be sick, Mox."

They rushed up in the elevator to their room, in time. I must try harder to understand this thing, she told herself in the bathroom.

She knew if they did not make love that night, the morning would be unpleasant, and somehow he knew it too, and came softly at her, removing the gown, and she embraced him hard and lovingly with her whiteness, opening all of herself, for she wanted him to know in the fullest way that white could love black and did, and they both sensed that the drunk American downstairs had to be erased with love, and they went from one bed to the other without a pause, a mass of black and white, with arms and legs twisted, their breath coming short above the music from downstairs and Margrit remembered crying silently, her tears mixing unnoticed with the perspiration of their bodies and how, when they left the beds, they drifted across the room to the sun parlor where the full moon leaned patiently against the windows while the sea rushed headlong against the seawall a few hundred yards away downstairs, exploding into billions of phosphorescent bubbles; they put out their cigarettes and began to make love again in a sun parlor chair, lap-love, and the moonlight stroked their restless, jerking bodies, him in her, her around him, moving in that good rhythm until the little cries came again and the pimples rose on their flesh and the nipples of her breasts shot hard and trembling beneath his kneading hands; the exhausted bodies unhinged; they heard the sea withdraw from the wall; the swollen lips parted and Margrit felt a hot, electric quivering down there, a reaction, as she slid from his lap.

And the morning was quite all right.

Cuernavaca was a better memory with its beamed-ceiling seventeenth-century house hidden from a shabby street. There was a swimming pool set in the center of an acre of well-tended grass, and around the fringes were clusters of roses and mimosa, honeysuckle, bougainvillaea and the nameless Mexican flowers that breathe a sweetness through day and night. In Cuernavaca the smiles came again, and the work went well, and their love-making, on the eight beds in the giant house, was without desperation. The house was on a hill, and through the vines on the fence they could look down on the city from three sides, see the ragged buses droning up the other steep hills, hear the soldiers in the barracks across the way singing and shouting. Everyone in the town talked of a writer named Malcolm Lowry and Max smiled and said: "I'll bet that cat didn't know *half* these people who say they knew him. Poor bastard; he could have used some knowing." Max hated to leave the place. On the plane the tension started to come once more, his quiet, angry tension that frightened her so, but she could see him fighting it off and she was content.

Near their first anniversary Max bought a new rifle; he already had four guns. This did not disturb her as much as his matter-of-fact manner. That puzzled and upset her, but she could not bring herself to speak of the weapons which, granted, he used when he went hunting. At the same time, nightly, she witnessed on television the humiliations of the black Americans throughout the country; acid was thrown into the swimming places they tried to integrate; electric cattle prods were put to their bodies when they sat at lunch counters and participated in other demonstrations. It seemed to Margrit that what was *happening* provided the connection to what Max was *doing*. She wondered if other black men were silently going about as he was, hunting regularly ("Brushing up the old eye, baby"), buying guns. In Holland it had been very easy to urge that violence be met with violence. But, being in America, it was somehow different . . .

A few months later, plagued by his increasing sensitivity to the way people looked at them when they were together, his purchases of boxes of ammunition he could never use up in three seasons of hunting, let alone one, she timidly asked: "Mox, what is it all about?"

"What, Maggie?"

"The guns, your touchiness, the target shooting."

"I'm simply trying to keep my head, but these bastards are trying to make me lose it."

"Your mind is closed to me. I feel so distant from you sometimes, as if I were one of *them*. I feel left out and that something terrible is about to happen. Let us return to Holland, Mox. I'm afraid."

He took a long time answering.

"Dear Margrit. I had hoped you'd understand by now. There's us and there's them. Us means me because I'm black, and it means you because I love you, and it means all the people who want to feel as we do about each other, and all the people who've never had a chance to feel anything. Things are changing so fast. Things are getting very nasty and things happen more quickly and viciously and everyone says they couldn't see them coming. I won't lie; I see them coming. You remember St. Thomas and Puerto Rico. Those are the small things you are involved in every day if you're a black man and your wife is white. They just put it to you that way; all they really want to do is to beat your ass good, but they don't know that when they want that, they want your life, because things have changed and nothing is going to stop with an ass-beating anymore; it's the whole thing or nothing—"

"Mox—"

"Let me finish, darling. I want to finish. I am sorry. I don't mean for these people to do this to us; I won't let them and this is the only way I know. *Nothing else has worked.* There seems to be no turning back from this need to apply force. They are at you and they understand nothing about the position they've put you in.

"The law in this country, just like in most countries, is for the privileged and if you're white in America, you are privileged. We hope for the law to protect us, but it doesn't. I've seen the White House break laws, and I am not about to console myself that if brought before the court for being in a street fight, I can count on a fair dispensation of justice. The

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other side has guns, Maggie, and power, everything serious killers should have to do their jobs. Without law on my side, I become the law; my guns are the law, and the only law people in any nation live by is the law of force or the threat of force. Love don't do what a good ass-kickin' can.

"I've worked too long and too hard and seen too much and know too much to go quietly if and when they come for me. I'm not Dutch, baby, I'm an American. What business do I have in Holland with Negroes who won't face up to what's really happening here? When you first started to learn to shoot, I hoped there was something in your European existence that would help you understand how necessary it is to learn to defend one's self. Nine million people were murdered because they did not defend themselves, more people than in the armies and civilian forces that killed them. Now, that doesn't make any kind of sense, does it?

"It won't be like that here. At least, not in the beginning. Some of us have learned some hard lessons from what happened in Europe, and I mean black and white. We have also learned some hard lessons from our own country. I know civil rights leaders who talk about guns and island hideouts, privately of course. They know about the enemy and if the enemy knows this, knows we are in another time in which we will kill back or kill *first*, he will move slowly, if he moves at all. The military call this deterrent strength. I mean no harm with these guns, Maggie. I can't begin to tell you what has happened inside me to make me even think like this. But I have some measure of peace now, because I can answer the white man's choice for the future: death or peace. I will only harm him if I know he means to harm me. I think he does."

"Did you know this when we married?"

"Yes, I knew it."

His words, enormous, ghastly, elusive, animal. But he seemed calm and sure sitting there, watching her anxiously.

"All this talk shocks me. It frightens me, too, Mox. I did not know—"

"What did you know then?" His voice cracked out at her.

"I—"

" 'I,' *hell*, Maggie! I'm telling you the way it is and you're talking about shock. *Don't you know who you married?* Did you forget everything we ever talked about?"

"That was in Holland," she fought back. "It did not seem *real*. And we never talked like *this*—"

"You didn't really listen, then. You watch the news every night. What do you think? Those poor colored people? Isn't it terrible? Is that what you think, Margrit? Honey, come *on*! You know better. I *taught* you better. This ain't Holland, baby, this is the YOO ESS AY, where niggers have had it with getting their heads beat, and I'm a nigger! Do you *hear* me? And you're married to a nigger unless you don't want to be any longer. That's really all there is to it, Maggie, right?"

Her voice came out desperately. "But life has to go on. I *am* married to you; we *do* have each other. You are an uncommon man, therefore, there must be other ways for this peace."

"There is and this is it. What looks like death is life and what for so long looked like life was death. Baby, they don't want us to have each other. The guns are here because we have *got* to have each other."

She flung herself up, crying and screaming. "THAT IS SO PARANOID, WHAT YOU ARE SAYING AND DOING AND THINKING!"

His eyes alone seemed to smile at her, tenderly as at a strange child passing. "Margrit, in the twenties and thirties when Europeans came here to become Americans, they had only to say 'nigger' and they got their papers. In the fifties and sixties the language became a little more polite; those people had only to say 'you're paranoid.' Congratulations, now you really are an American."

She had fled, and crying entered that labyrinth, the ugly, dark middle of it, uncertain, lost, but from where she had to commence her search for him. She ran toward every illusion of light; she tapped for hollowness in the walls behind which there might be a lever to pull and suddenly flood the interiors with blinding light so she could see him and lead him out; she trod the moss-covered floors and touched wet, dank walls, and nasty little animals slithered away from her. Once she stepped on something large and it made a long hisssssing sound, and she ran past it, screaming. Then one day, she assumed it was a day, for there was neither day nor night in that place, only she remembered periods of twenty-four hours, a day, she thought she heard tapping on another wall and a voice, hoarse with much use. She tapped and cried out. The tapping on the other side became louder and she heard his voice just as another little beast slid between her fingers toward the floor:

—Margrit, Maggie, baby, it's me, Max! Keep to your left, Maggie, keep going left, baby, the heart-side. Can you hear me? Move to your left. I am moving to the left, the heart-side—

—Yes my schatje, *I hear you. I am moving to the left also, to the heart-side—*

"It's here," he said with a smile, and hefted the galleys in his hand. He kissed her. "This is when you finally begin to feel as though you've written a novel."

There was bright sun, and spring once more. She sat beside him while he opened the envelope and unfolded the curled pages of the proofs.

"Max, not really, now. You can't mean there will never be another book. It is your life; it is our life. What would we do? You will not work for *Events* forever?"

"Well, I think I mean it."

"Darling, you tease me too much."

"Hey, Maggie."

"Yes?"

"Let's rip off a little, what say, baby?"

"Ugh, such an ugly picture you make. Right now?"

"Yes, right now."

"But dinner will be late."

"So?"

"So."

Later she asked, "What does the good Dr. Woodson have to say?"

"Oh, I have to go back."

"But why?"

"I hadn't flushed myself out very well."

"Poor Mox. Soon all the troubles will be over with your little behind and you will be quite all right again."

"Promise?"

"My darling, I promise everything good for us."

One day he came home in high agitation and she believed it had to do with what was happening in the South, Birmingham and other places; it was 1963. There followed a period of moving, doing things, going places and seeing people. He kissed her in public after that time, she remembered. In the small hours of the morning, she would awake to find him at

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his typewriter, as if in a frenzy to hold on to every passing moment. So often when she spoke to him, his mind was far away, and she had to lead him back gently, as if afraid to wake a sleepwalker. That period sloped suddenly down into one when he woke up and stared at the ceiling, then announced that he wasn't going to work, to hell with *Events*. Sometimes he left before breakfast and she knew he was not going to work, and she would not see him until late in the evening, martinis reeking on his breath. He spent each Sunday cleaning his guns, although they didn't need it. Before them on television danced the police dogs, police and Negroes; fire hoses gushed and Margrit felt lost again, deserted.

"Mox, not again, not with those guns and that look about you. I can't stand any more of it. I won't stand for it. I hate it all, all of it, those stupid whites and those taunting blacks. I am sick of it!"

His eyes seemed to have made a noise when he looked at her through that shocked silence that had produced her short, bitter tirade. *Click*, the eyes seemed to have said.

"I'm sorry, Maggie."

He seemed this time to be giving way to her, leading her on, encouraging her to have it out, all of it, finally, and she shouted, "Sorry be dommed! Look what's happening to us again. *Look*, I tell you! Aren't you man enough to stand above this nonsense?" She knew she should not have said that.

He spoke quietly and simply, without any special tone in his voice. "It's not nonsense. I've told you that."

She stared at the guns arranged neatly on the floor, newspapers under them, and suddenly she hated the smell of the gun oil. Their eyes locked across the weapons which were so beautiful in a way, lying there mute and for the moment harmless. She bent quickly and grabbed up a shotgun while he watched her, and beat the stock into the floor several times while the apartment reverberated with the blows. The trigger guard, when she stopped, panting, sprung loose. Margrit was all the more at a loss because—*she had seen it*—there had been for a second a very tender and loving thing in her husband's eyes. Now it was gone.

"That's enough," he said, still quietly.

"It's *not* enough, it's just the beginning."

"You're wrong, Maggie. It's the end."

"Then, dommit, *let* it be the end. This stupid place with whites and blacks at each other's throats, I can't *stand* it! You are right, Mox. It is the end. Agreed?"

"Agreed."

She whirled out of the room and when she got to the bedroom, slammed the door. "Enough of this crazy land," she hissed at herself in the mirror, "where everyone speaks in superlatives but exists in diminutives. Shhhittt! on it. It can go to hell!!"

A big protest march had been planned for Washington the day Margrit left New York. She had stayed on in New York several months after their break-up, waiting for what, she didn't know. She was not defeated, merely tired and unbearably worn. Max had moved out of the apartment the Sunday they had the fight; he would reclaim it today, when he got back from Washington. Huh! *If* he got back. The way this country was going, Washington would be going up in smoke by the time she was midway over the Atlantic.

He had called in the morning to say goodbye. Nothing more, just goodbye. After that she cried; he'd always said she cried too easily, but she got to the airport.

She opened the New York *Century* on the plane. On page three a headline read:

AFRICAN DIPLOMAT FOUND DEAD IN SWISS HOTEL.

Jaja Enzkwu, 55, First Minister to the Nigerian Federal Cabinet, was reported dead . . .

Margrit turned to another page. Enzkwu? She did not recall ever hearing of him.

IN AMSTERDAM, Margrit got up and called the American Hotel again. Max had not returned. She called Roger once more, but there was no answer. She pulled on a pair of white gloves, looked at herself once again, then went downstairs. The hotel was about ten blocks away. When she arrived she checked at the desk, but Max still had not come. She selected a sidewalk table near the hotel entrance and ordered a Campari. She put on sunglasses. From where she was sitting, she would be sure to see him when he returned.

[16]

LEIDEN

YES, MAX THOUGHT. I knew Jaja Enzkwu, eagle-faced, hot-eyed Jaja with his sweating, pussy-probing fingers and perfumed agbadas; I knew him.

Max glanced at his watch again. Two o'clock. He wondered what Margrit was doing back in Amsterdam on such a beautiful day. He knew what Jaja was doing: feeding the bugs back in Onitsha where he had been sent in a box, after that deadly rendezvous with Baroness Huganot in Basel that day.

So much had happened that day, the day of the March on Washington. Margrit had left shortly after he called her. Then he had taken a plane to Washington. Du Bois had died in Ghana the night before, and so had Jaja, leaving behind an opened magnum of Piper-Heidsieck, a half-eaten partridge and a startled, voluptuous, eager-to-be-ravished baroness. But Washington had been the place to be that day. There you could forget that the cancer tests were positive—it was malignant—and that you were going into cobalt treatment soon; you could forget with more than a quarter million people surging around you.

Max flipped up the next page of the letter and when he finished, he shook as if with a sudden chill, and yet the shaking hand had nothing to do with his illness; it was the letter itself. With trembling hands he lit a cigarette.

No, he told himself. I have not read what I just read. This cannot be. No, it's me, the way I'm thinking, the way I'm reading. He closed his eyes hard and held them for a long time. Then he opened them to the letter once again:

The Alliance had not counted on the efficiency of the Central Intelligence Agency, which had placed agents in Nigeria within days of receiving the report that Jaja had information. Concealing King Alfred became the top priority assignment of the National Security Council and the CIA. Jaja was not killed at once for two reasons: first, the agents were unable to ascertain where he kept the papers. Second, on a trip to Paris, the agents made a fake attempt on his life to make him go for the papers. But this only resulted in arousing Jaja's curiosity, and he began backtracking

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through his former operatives and discovered that the Americans knew that he knew. Then Jaja started to deal. He'd give over the papers and keep his mouth shut, if the Americans gave him Nigeria. The U.S. had no choice but to agree, when it had the opportunity. It would take time. All right, Jaja said. But not *too* much time.

Jaja moved, ate, slept and crapped with an army of bodyguards. He had only to put it out that the Hausas in the north were after him, and every Ibo in the eastern region understood.

Enzkwu came to see me two days before your March on Washington. He was thin and drawn and quite subdued. Almost a year, I learned later, had passed since making the deal with the U.S. and nothing had come of it. Even Charlotte did not bring out that old gleam to his eyes, as her presence has done for many of my friends. Jaja and I had dinner that night, surrounded by some of the biggest Ibos I've ever seen. After, a car followed us, but it was his and was filled with his men. We didn't talk too much in his hotel. We were in one room and his guards in another. Every five minutes, one of the guards would knock on the door and ask something in Ibo, and Jaja would reply in Ibo. It was always the same question and the same answer.

Jaja was on his way to Switzerland and he gave me the key to a safe deposit box in a Paris bank and told me to get what was in it, if he did not return from Switzerland. I was puzzled and curious about his mood, but I took the key without asking questions. Of course, he was killed. I hustled to the bank and what I found was this information you now have found, plus a letter from Jaja, similar to my letter which you are now reading. The material fascinated me. I'd spent so much of my life writing about the evil machinations of Mr. Charlie without really *knowing* the truth, as this material made me know it. It was spread out before me, people places and things. I became mired in them, and I *knew* now that the way black men live on this earth was no accident. And yet, my mind kept telling me that Jaja's death was a coincidence, a mere coincidence. I could not believe that I, too, soon would be dead. One looks at death, always moves toward it, but until the last denies its existence. I was trapped by my contempt for everything African. I made the bodyguards just a part of the African spectacle. I gripped the material, I hugged it to my chest, for now I would know; if they killed me, I would know that this great evil did exist, indeed, thrived. And Dr. Faustus came to my mind. The Americans killed Jaja, obviously because they ran out of patience, and because they thought they could find the material without him.

I didn't say anything to you when you came through Paris on your way to East Africa because I had not seen Jaja then.

It is spring. Strange, now that life seems to quicken a bit, and you can see people smiling more, and the trees starting to bloom, I feel tired, going downhill. I am sure the Americans are on to me. Perhaps the French keep them off, not wanting trouble to becloud de Gaulle's new image. At least that's what I think, and that's why I haven't made any trips outside France. I thought of giving it to the Russians, but would they even accept it from me? Even if they did, can't you see the West laughing it off as another Russian hoax, even Negroes?

But there was America itself. You and *Events*. You must have access to outlets where this material would do the most good. The choice is yours and yours alone as to whether you want to wreck the nation or not. My opinion? No, Max, it's up to you. Think of the irony: the very nation that most wants to keep the information secret, would be the very one to release it!

A personal item: Charlotte seems to have found a strange tolerance for me these days. I think she knows about the material. And she has found out about Michelle and me, at last. How, I don't know, exactly, but I think American agents have told her, to enlist her aid.

In fact, Max, old trusted friend, everybody knows everything now, past and present.

I am getting this material to Michelle tonight. She will get it to you even if she has to swim to New York. I know of no one else. And perhaps this is a sign, the ultimate sign, that I am very tired. I can only hope that no harm comes to her.

Another item, old buddy. Tomorrow I'm having lunch with a young man I understand you've met. His name is Edwards, and he's quit Uncle Sam's foreign service to write a novel about it. I can't resist these youngsters who come to see me, to sit at the feet of the father, so to speak. I guess I'll never outgrow it. I suppose you're next in line to be father . . .

Harry

Shock, gracious, pain-absorbing shock came at once and lessened the hurt and surprise. Max, reacting normally for the moment, lit another cigarette, picked through and carefully read Enzkwu's papers.

Yes, there was explosive material here. Enough to unsettle every capital city in the West; enough to force the Africans to cut ties with Europe at once and worry about the consequences later; enough to send black Brazilians surging out of their *favelas* and *barrios* to inundate the sleek beach places of the whites. Wherever white men had been involved with black men, Enzkwu's photostats disclosed a clear and unrelenting danger. Recorded in cold black type were lists of statesmen and diplomats, the records of their deeds, what they planned to do, when, where, why and to whom. The list of people dead, Max knew, and therefore murdered, if their names appeared in Enzkwu's papers, included the residents of four continents. African airfields equipped for the handling of jets and props, along with radio and power stations, the number of men in the army of each country, plus a military critique of those armies, were set down here.

Now Max's hand held another numbered packet, but above the number were the words: THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA—KING ALFRED. Slowly, he pulled out the sheaf of photostats. So, this is King Alfred, Alfred the Great. He mused, why is it called King Alfred? Then he saw the answer footnoted at the bottom of the first page.

*KING ALFRED**

In the event of widespread and continuing and coordinated racial disturbances in the United States, KING ALFRED, at the discretion of the President, is to be put into action immediately.

PARTICIPATING FEDERAL AGENCIES

National Security Council	Department of Justice
Central Intelligence Agency	Department of Defense
Federal Bureau of Investigation	Department of Interior

PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCIES

(Under Federal Jurisdiction)

National Guard Units	State Police

PARTICIPATING LOCAL AGENCIES

(Under Federal Jurisdiction)

City Police	County Police

Memo: National Security Council

Even before 1954, when the Supreme Court of the United States of America declared unconstitutional separate educational and recreational facilities, racial unrest and discord had become very nearly a part of the American way of life. But that way of

*849-899(?) King of England; directed translation from the Latin of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

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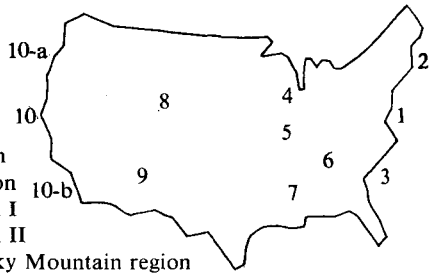
life was repugnant to most Americans. Since 1954, however, that unrest and discord have broken out into widespread violence which increasingly have placed the peace and stability of the nation in dire jeopardy. This violence has resulted in loss of life, limb and property, and has cost the taxpayers of this nation billions of dollars. And the end is not yet in sight. This same violence has raised the tremendously grave question as to whether the races can ever live in peace with each other. Each passing month has brought new intelligence that, despite new laws passed to alleviate the condition of the Minority, the Minority still is not satisfied. Demonstrations and rioting have become a part of the familiar scene. Troops have been called out in city after city across the land, and our image as a world leader severely damaged. Our enemies press closer, seeking the advantage, possibly at a time during one of these outbreaks of violence. The Minority has adopted an almost military posture to gain its objectives, which are not clear to most Americans. It is expected, therefore, that when those objectives are denied the Minority, racial war must be considered inevitable. When that Emergency comes, we must expect the total involvement of all 22 million members of the Minority, men, women and children, for once this project is launched, its goal is to terminate, once and for all, the Minority threat to the whole of the American society, and, indeed, the Free World.

Chairman, National Security Council

Preliminary Memo: Department of Interior

Under KING ALFRED, the nation has been divided into 10 Regions (See accompanying map).

In case of Emergency, Minority members will be evacuated from the cities by federalized National Guard units, local and state police and, if necessary, by units of the Regular Armed Forces, using public and military transportation, and detained in nearby military installations until a further course of action has been decided.



1—Capital region
2—Northeast region
3—Southeast region
4—Great Lakes region
5—South central region
6—Deep South region I
7—Deep South region II
8—Great Plains, Rocky Mountain region
9—Southwest region
10—a, b—West Coast region

No attempt will be made to seal off the Canadian and Mexican borders.

Secretary, Department of Interior

Combined Memo: Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Central Intelligence Agency

There are 12 major Minority organizations and all are familiar to the 22 million. Dossiers have been compiled on the leaders of the organizations, and can be studied in Washington. The material contained in many of the dossiers, and our threat to reveal that material, has considerably held in check the activities of some of the leaders. Leaders who do not have such usable material in their dossiers have been approached to take government posts, mostly as ambassadors and primarily in African countries. The promise of these positions also has materially contributed to a temporary slow-down of Minority activities. However, we do not expect these slow-downs to be of long duration, because there are always new and dissident elements joining these organizations, with the potential power to replace the old leaders. All organizations and their leaders are under constant, 24-hour surveillance. The organizations are:

1—The Black Muslims
2—Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)
3—Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)
4—Uhuru Movement
5—Group on Advanced Leadership (GOAL)
6—Freedom Now Party (FNP)
7—United Black Nationalists of America (UBNA)
8—The New Pan-African Movement (TNPAM)
9—Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)
10—The National Urban League (NUL)
11—The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
12—Committee on Racial and Religious Progress (CORARP)

NOTE: At the appropriate time, to be designated by the President, the leaders of some of these organizations are to be detained ONLY WHEN IT IS CLEAR THAT THEY CANNOT PREVENT THE EMERGENCY, working with local public officials during the first critical hours. All other leaders are to be detained at once. Compiled lists of Minority leaders have been readied at the National Data Computer Center. It is necessary to use the Minority leaders designated by the President in much the same manner in which we use Minority members who are agents with CENTRAL and FEDERAL, and cannot, until there is no alternative, reveal KING ALFRED in all its aspects. Minority members of Congress will be unseated at once. This move is not without precedent in American history.

Attorney General

Preliminary Memo: Department of Defense

This memo is being submitted in lieu of a full report from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. That report is now in preparation. There will be many cities where the Minority will be able to put into the street a superior number of people with a desperate and dangerous will. He will be a formidable enemy, for he is bound to the Continent by heritage and knows that political asylum will not be available to him in other countries. The greatest concentration of the Minority is in the Deep South, the Eastern seaboard, the Great Lakes region and the West Coast. While the national population exceeds that of the Minority by more than ten times, we must realistically take into account the following:

1—An estimated 40-50 per cent of the white population will not, for various reasons, engage the Minority during an Emergency.
2—American Armed Forces are spread around the world. A breakout of war abroad means fewer troops at home to handle the Emergency.
3—Local law enforcement officials must contain the Emergency until help arrives, though it may mean fighting a superior force. New York City, for example, has a 25,000-man police force, but there are about one million Minority members in the city.

We are confident that the Minority could hold any city it took for only a few hours. The weapons, facilities, logistics—all put the Minority at a final disadvantage.

Since the Korean War, this Department has shifted Minority members of the Armed Forces to areas where combat is most likely to occur, with the aim of eliminating, through combat, as many combat-trained Minority servicemen as possible. Today the ratio of Minority member combat deaths in Vietnam, where they are serving as "advisors," is twice as high as the Minority population ratio to the rest of America. Below is the timetable for KING ALFRED as tentatively suggested by the JCS who recommended that the operation be made over a period of eight hours:

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1. Local police and Minority leaders in action to head off the Emergency
2. Countdown to eight hours begins at the moment the President determines the Emergency to be:

A. National	
B. Coordinated	
C. Of Long Duration	8th Hour
3. County police join local police.	7th
4. State police join county and local forces.	6th
5. Federal marshals join state, county and local forces.	5th
6. National Guards federalized, held in readiness.	4th
7. Regular Armed Forces alerted, take up positions; Minority troops divided and detained under guard.	3rd
8. All Minority leaders, national and local, detained.	2nd
9. President addresses Minority on radio-television, gives it one hour to end the Emergency.	1st
10. All units under regional commands into the Emergency.	0

'O' Committee Report:

Survey shows that, during a six-year period, Production created 9,000,000 objects, or 1,500,000 each year. Production could not dispose of the containers, which proved a bottleneck. However, that was almost 20 years ago. We suggest that vaporization techniques be employed to overcome the Production problems in KING ALFRED.

Secretary of Defense

Max smoked and read, read and smoked until his mouth began to taste like wool and when he finally pushed King Alfred from him, he felt exhausted, as if he had been running beneath a gigantic, unblinking eye that had watched his every move and determined just when movement should stop.

Yeah, Jaja had done his work well. He could have embarrassed and startled a lot of people, blacks and whites, but you have to weed a garden for the flowers to grow. Those dossiers, he knew pretty much what was in them. Well, he had known it; there are always dues to pay. A smoldering anger coursed through Max's stomach. Yes, those leaders clearly had left themselves vulnerable, vulnerable for the hunters who, for a generation and more, sought Communists with such vehemence that they skillfully obscured the growth and power of fascism. How black skins stirred fascists! Perhaps because it was the most identifiable kind of skin; you didn't have to wait until you got up close to see whether a nose was hooked or not; a black skin you could see for a block away. And in the face of the revelations in Jaja's papers, Harry and Jaja both, made giddy by the presence of that massive, killing evil, had dared to toy with it; had dared to set their pitiable little egos down before that hideous juggernaut. And they had hoped to live. That hope had revealed their inability to accurately measure what was readily measurable. Jaja for greed, and you, Harry, it's just starting to come. They didn't let their minds go out.

They did not let their minds go out to picture the instability of what seems static; they did not see planets colliding with each other, or picture Sahara or Kalahari as lakes, or picture plains where the Alps, Andes and Rockies now stand; nor did they picture oceans above the sands that crunch softly beneath the feet in the sweet-smelling paths of the Maine or Vermont woods. No, they did not picture the extinction of man and beast and places. If they had, *then* they could see four million dead because they themselves, like the later nine million, refused to see evil rearing up before them, quite discernible, quite measurable. Man is nature, nature man, and all crude and raw, stinking, vicious, evil. And holding that evil lightly because the collective mind refuses to recall the sprint of mountains, the vault of seas and, of course, beside that, the puny murder of millions.

It is still eat, drink and be murderous, for tomorrow I may be among the murdered.

This seeing precisely, Max told himself, is a bitch!

Harry, these papers: I'll get them to New York for you. I know this other guy who isn't afraid to die, and he doesn't have cancer, as far as I know, which truly makes him bad! Problem, Harry: do I tell Michelle you hated me so much that you were willing to have her killed, or do I just let her death come as a surprise to her?

Halfway down the stairs, two more pills starting to catch up with the pain, and wondering just how many times Harry had gone down or climbed up the steep, narrow steps. Max forced a smile to greet Michelle standing at the bottom of the steps. "Hey. How about some whiskey?"

Michelle had watched him come down, cushioning each step with exaggerated bends of the knees. His face had gone a brownish-gray. She smiled back up at him; there was a game to be played here. "Whiskey? Why not, after a hard afternoon's work and a little nap?"

"Love you," Max said. He clutched the case under one arm and stood holding to the back of a chair; he'd sat down much too long upstairs, and there was the long car ride back to Amsterdam. He looked at Michelle. God, he was not going to have a redhead.

Michelle waited. Had Harry left word of any kind for her, any word at all? But Max said nothing. As she moved finally to fix the drink, she said as casually as she could, "There was nothing for me?"

"No, Michelle, nothing."

"Oh."

"I'm sorry."

Michelle shrugged; it was that Gallic shrug that expressed in its way, the ultimate unimportance of such small things.

"I'd like to use your phone, Michelle. Is it working?"

"Yes, it's working. Why don't you sit down?"

"In a minute. I want to call New York."

"New York? The papers were very important then?"

"Yes, they are." Perhaps now was the time to tell her that after sixteen years all she had amounted to in the end was nothing more than a piece of red-trimmed white ass to Harry. Otherwise, how could he have done this thing to her? *I can only hope that no harm comes to her*. Sure, like that. After sixteen years a little stinking hope. "Thanks," he said, taking the drink.

"Michelle, when I finish my call, you must call your husband—" He could see horror creeping in startled degrees across her face. "—Tell him to come and get you right away, and take you back to France. Then call the French Embassy. Tell them you want protection until your husband arrives."

White-faced, Michelle stammered, "But I do not understand, Max. My husband, what will he think? I told you, he knows nothing of this place. Besides, *why?*"

"It's the papers," he said in a hollow voice. "Harry's papers. Don't ask me to tell you more. If you want to live, do as I say." He stared outside at the dark green canal. Placid. Ugly

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anyplace else. "Throw away anything that has to do with Harry. Do it now. There's no other way. Please do it and don't sit there asking questions with your eyes. I want you to live. He —Harry would want you to live."

She moved quickly across the room and gripped his arm. "Who killed him?"

"Who? People. Fascists, I think, who else? And they know you."

Silence filled the room until she said, "And you?"

"I've cancer. You know."

"Does Margrit know?"

"Go clean up, Michelle. This is no time for that." Now the pills were getting to him; it seemed, suddenly, easy.

"She would want to know."

"Aren't you afraid, Michelle?"

"Yes. Can't you tell? And you, Max?"

Max thought: Here we are, just two people, strangers, really, with just the feel of a tit and a kiss between us. "Yes, I'm afraid." He felt her hand sliding tenderly along his arm.

"I will know someday what this is all about?"

"I hope not."

"All right. I will go now. To clean up. There is no other way, you are sure, Max?"

"No other way. None at all." He didn't tell her that even this might not work.

When she had left the room he pulled his telephone book from his pocket. Yes, he was going to call New York, but first he was going to call Margrit. At least she should know about the cancer; she deserved that. He listened to her phone ring. Outside, between Leiden and Amsterdam, maybe even in Leiden, they waited. They would not have had time to do anything with the phone. Holland wasn't in the Alliance, didn't even have an auxiliary group—yet.

Margrit's phone rang twice more. (Be there, baby.) Twice again. (*Be* there, Maggie!) Three times more and he imagined that she was just coming up the steps to her flat. (Now she was at the top of the landing, hearing the phone for the first time.) Max let the phone ring again. (Now! She had her key out; was slipping it into the lock, pushing open the door, rushing into her flat! Picking up the phone! Now, now, *now*!!) The phone continued to ring and Max slowly hung up.

He poured himself another drink, thinking to himself, Man, am I starting to fly!

Although in another room, Michelle heard Max squeeze the cork from the bottle, heard the neck of the bottle unsteadily on his glass. She did not understand it all, Max, Harry's sudden death, nothing, except that there *were* the papers which Harry had enjoined her to get to Max in New York, somehow, some way, as quickly as possible. And Harry *had* died the following day, the very day, it turned out, that Max arrived in Paris. His presence at the funeral had taken her by surprise. Surprise, grief and now mystery. It was too much. She had been planning to go to Leiden when Max called from Amsterdam. She could not, in the presence of her husband, behave as though nothing had happened. She had left, going, she said, to Cannes. But she went north, met Max, and now, soon, her husband would be coming north and unless she lied very well and circumspectly, grief might come to him after all. Grief, or anger.

Here: a pair of Harry's sneakers, old, faded from white to a vile gray, but they had made him look young, especially with these: two V-necked sweaters. There was some underwear and three shirts laundered and fresh for his next visit, which would have been in July. Handkerchiefs, old pages from manuscripts either published or abandoned. There: an extra set of galley proofs; pictures which he had taken of her in the courtyard along with pictures she had taken of him. A picture of Max and Claudia Ames, pensive, almost scowling, as if sensing that the picture was destined to be viewed far, far away from their home in Paris where it had been taken by their father.

Fear came slowly to Michelle, but she could not particularize it. Was it the fear of discovery by her husband, the deep grief or, on the other hand, the angry words, the blows, perhaps the lonely life without him, a catastrophe at her age, or the life with him in which he quite deliberately carried on affairs with young female poets, American mostly, for all Europe waited for the Americans to come during the summers with their money and sex to fit to their strange dithyrambs.

Or was it the fear of death because of association with Harry, as Max had implied? Why hadn't Harry told her more? They had shared so many things, everything and now—the thought was too appalling—this single secret threatened to take her life as it had taken his. Was that the greater fear?

No. It could not be. She was European and dying violently was a European habit. All other deaths were commonplace. A European learned by his condition to expect catastrophe and invariably that was exactly what he received. In Europe, a winner was one who bested those common deaths arbitrarily assigned to others. You crawled, kissed behinds, ate *merde*, and grinned like you loved it. Living was everything. The final fact of death was of no consequence; it was the living while everyone around died that counted. Michelle knew there was no other tradition for her but to be a survivor.

She moved hurriedly from room to room, gathering papers, pictures, clothes, ashtrays from restaurants where they had eaten. No, she did not want to know what was in that case Max held so tightly under his arm. Obviously, it was the knowing that killed. The suitcase she was stuffing the things into was full now. She looked around, retraced her steps and saw nothing more of Harry's to put into it. She locked the case and trudged heavily up the stairs to the attic. She had no intention of throwing Harry's things away. They'd keep well enough in a corner. She almost smiled to herself. That was the most European of traits, putting things into attic corners. She passed the room where Max had napped and read the papers. What secrets did that room now hold!

Downstairs, Max waited for the international operator to call him back. He felt good now. The pills, the whiskey, the decision-making. He knew he did not hate; they'd exhausted him in too many ways before allowing that to congeal; he'd had some breaks. He didn't hate the way Harry had, not that killing hatred that turned in upon yourself and those close to you. Max could have hated. There had been the Army, there had been Lillian (but they had given him Margrit in her place). There had been enough ammunition to hate them every single, unrelenting tick of the clock every day of his life. But he did not hate. Oh, he had not forgotten; it was just that the future demanded something else. He had made his decision with the same cold objectivity that made the Alliance so formidable. And it had been an easy decision to make. After all, he was as good as dead. Was the doing difficult at such a time? At any other time in his life, given the chance, he would not have been able to make such a decision.

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They had had several chances. They had the Civil War; that was to be a start. Reconstruction; that was to be a start. Truman's integrated Army; that was to be a start. May 17, 1954; that was to be a start. The March last August; that was to be a start. Each new President, his mouth filled with words, promised a new start. There were always starts, the big ones and the little ones, but there were never any finishes. Enzkwu's papers proved they were faking it all the time; *all the goddamn time*! Time had moved on but beneath the surface change remained in doubt. And it was time they came to know, once and for all, that Negroes now knew everything.

There were lessons:

The unprotesting, unembattled die.

The enemy today is the believer in Anglo-Saxon updated racial mythology.

The clash is inevitable because Justice is an uncool Lesbian.

Many, many will die, Bernard Zutkin. Black bodies will jam the streets. But those bodies, while they still have life, would be heading downtown this time. No more Harlem. East Cleveland. Lynch Street. Watts. Southside. Downtown. Those people are going to tear up that unreal tranquillity that exists in the United States. The promises, unfulfilled, can go to hell now. That 345-year-old bill, its interest climbing since Jamestown and *before*, is going to be presented.

After that, Mister Charlie and the engineers of King Alfred, you will have learned your lesson. There will be, you see, white bodies, too. Once, the *first time*, like this, really (behold, Nat Turner! Look here, "Mad" John. How does that grab you, Denmark? In the balls, Gabriel?) should be enough. Max saw once more:

The chino-covered legs, blurs of white sneakers mixed with heavy country shoes, the uneven drumming of running feet on the grass, the curses.

And heard:

"*I call now for black manhood. Dignity. Pride. Don't turn the other cheek any more. Defend yourselves, strike back, and when you do, strike to hurt, strike to maim, strike to—*" Kill, Max thought, wearily. I am going to loose those beasts, black and white, and when they are through, and it may take them a long time to get through, perhaps even as long as this farce which has forced us to this has been running, we will know just where we stand. It will be a start.

But remember. Like everything else, you started this too. Today it is the Alliance, it is King Alfred; before it was something else and something else before that. Lie about it. Cry about it. I know the truth and can do something about it.

Michelle dropped something on the floor above. Michelle, Max thought. She took it well enough. No questions, or not many questions. On a continent where life marched evenly with the tread of armies, the European was attuned to death, expected it in a way, he supposed, and avoided the first suggestion of its coming. So many of them were Negroes in that respect, but didn't know it.

The phone rang and Max's heart began to pound. Was he right? Was he wrong? He moved to the instrument. The international operator had his number. Max began to pull the papers from the case once more. He stacked them beside the phone and listened intently to the hums and sharp clicks on the line. Yes, it *is* right, he told himself. What choice is there? None. He was putting an end to the peace in which Negroes died one at a time in Southern swamps or by taking cops' bullets, the dying from overwork and underpay, praying all the while, looking to the heavens. Max smeared away the sweat that had come to his face and hands.

The voice from New York came through clearly. "Hello, hello?"

Max said, "Hello, you are a dead man. Maybe."

"Who is this?" The voice across the sea was both amused and impatient.

"Max. Max Reddick."

"Brother. Well, how are you? Where are we meeting this time?"

"Amsterdam."

"Brother, that's not where the people are."

"Yes, they're here, too."

"Really? I always think of the Dutch like the picture on the Old Dutch Cleanser can—blue, white and faceless."

"No. Not any more."

"Now, what's all this talk about dead men?"

"Is your machine on?"

"Brother, my machine is always on."

"Good. My friend, Harry Ames, is dead, you know."

"I read it. I'm sorry. I looked forward to meeting him."

"He was killed."

"Ah-ha. You *know* that he was killed."

"Yes."

"I'm listening; I hear you."

"What I have to say is important—"

"Of course. Otherwise you wouldn't be calling. I understand. Tell it to me, brother. Tell me all about it."

"Listen, then. Don't interrupt. I'll be reading for about forty minutes: notes, names, addresses, things. You'll know what to do. This material comes from Jaja Enzkwu."

"Brother Jaja, who is also dead. Go ahead, brother."

Max read. Once Michelle came into the room and he waved her out. And once he wet his throat with a sip of whiskey, but he read on and asked only once, "How is your tape?"

When he was finished, the voice at the other end of the line, heavy and yet tingling with subdued excitement asked, "Brother, are you armed?"

"Yes." Max was gathering the papers; it was done.

"You know you'll need it, don't you?"

"I know it."

"What can I say? Good luck. I *do* know what to do with this. If I don't see you again—the life is like that, brother—take some with you. My prayers to Allah commence at once. Salaam-Alaikum, baby!"

Max paused a moment, then said, "Sure, man, sure." He heard Minister Q give a deep chuckle which rumbled softly with satisfaction. Max hung up, staring at the phone and thinking, there, it's done.

[17]

NEW YORK

ONE BLOCK from Minister Q's office, along a street scaled with grime, crushed gray cigarettes and debris, in a tenement boarded up and condemned by the Board of Health, Department of Sanitation, the City of New York, one man tipped a pair of earphones from his head and swung a practiced eye to his delicate recording machinery.

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The room was neat; the adjoining bathroom still smelled of fresh paint. New walls had been put up and the lights repaired. A second man, his earphones off altogether, tapped thoughtfully on the cigarette-scarred naked pinewood table. Both men were in shirtsleeves, for it was May and a heat wave had come unheralded to the city. A small fan hummed quietly, stirring the cigarette smoke and the smell certain law enforcement officials always have about them, as if unable to remove from their persons, like coalmen or slaughterers, the odor of grime that is an integral part of their trade.

The second man, looking at the names he had written on the pad in front of him, said, "Stay with him, Tom; I'm calling the office."

"Minister's dialing again."

The second man picked up the phone. "This is Merriman, station 12. We just monitored a call from Amsterdam, Holland, from a Max Reddick. It was close to fifty minutes long. The subject of the call was an organization called the *Alliance Blanc*—that means the White Alliance, Reddick told the Minister, and something called King Alfred that sounds real crazy, about race riots and emergencies and the President and the Army. I don't know if this is for State, Central or us. I'll give you some of the names to check out, and a list of homicides connected with the White Alliance. Minister Q is calling a meeting for one o'clock, so we're still monitoring. It's going to be about the call he just got from Amsterdam."

The call had traveled beneath the sewers and subways through one wire which was bound tightly to a thousand others. From the Federal office which the first call reached, still another call was made, this one traveling out of the city, southward to Washington where, in a matter of minutes, the top secret vaults were opened and cross-indexed files traced, one back upon the other. One half hour later, a pipe-smoking official with thinning hair said to an assistant, "Technically, this is now Federal's baby, but since we've carried it this far, and there isn't time to go into details, Central will have to hang on to it. Get me New York."

At nine forty-five in the morning, the humidity building slowly, three men drove along the littered, battered street in New York and stopped one block from the boarded-up tenement. They walked briskly past the entrance of the building and into a small, flyspecked candy store and vanished.

At the sound of footsteps in the hall, the two men monitoring Minister Q's phone opened the door.

"Hiya, fellas," the first man through the door said, bending to get his massive body through.

"Hello, Barney, did we strike a mine?"

The man called Barney smiled. "Central thinks so. This is Ted Dallas, African division, foreign operations, and his assistant." The five men shook hands and the second man in shirtsleeves offered his pack of cigarettes around. "The jigs have really ripped it this time, hey?"

"Just play back the tape and shut your fat mouth," Dallas said curtly. "I'm a jig."

The second man opened his mouth to speak, changed his mind, and with a drawn smile on his face sat down and said to his mate, "Roll it, Tom."

The man called Tom pressed a lever and the voices of Max and Minister Q, along with telephone cable noises, filled the room.

The first man in shirtsleeves glanced briefly at Dallas and said, "He's still calling people." He cautiously handed Dallas a list of the names. Some Dallas knew, and some he didn't. The two technicians exchanged glances.

At the moment it was not important whether Dallas knew the people or not. He listened to the voices intently, head bent, pen in hand. He had to get it now and set it in action. He glanced at his watch. It would be about quarter to eleven when he finished listening to the tape. It was going to be a nasty business from here on out. Minister Q would have to be cut down. Federal's watch on the Minister had been increased to five men in just the past half hour, but Central would have to put on the play. The Minister would have to be stopped before the meeting or at the beginning of it. Dallas motioned to his assistant, a surly young blond who wore a straw hat with a bright band. He hesitated before speaking. He wondered now how Max had got into it, then wondered why he was doing it. He'd always had more balance than Harry. Enzkwu had been an ass from the first. When last reported on, Max had been in New York. Some friendship. But it was the habit of men like Max and Harry to be bitter about things here at home, but never to the extent of trying to wreck the country as they could with the information about Alliance Blanc. All the little people they said they cared about in their writing would be the first to go. "Call Washington," Dallas now said to his assistant. "I'm going to need two men to complete this job. Shotguns and .45's. Taking no chances. Negroes—"

Suddenly, the larger than life voices, Max's cold and tired, Minister Q's quick and angry, were talking about something called King Alfred. Dallas spun and stared at the loudspeakers. The voices boomed on. The two technicians stared past Dallas to his assistant and Barney, and Dallas now turned slowly to look at his assistant, and, when his eyes locked with the gray eyes beneath the straw hat, he knew that his assistant had known about King Alfred all along. Dallas's thoughts bunched like frightened cattle, then tried to flee down a corridor that was too narrow; they bumped and tumbled into and over each other. Numbly, Dallas watched his assistant reach for the phone. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw the man called Barney edge imperceptibly to block the door. His assistant was talking softly, staring out at Dallas from beneath the lid of his hat. Dallas crumpled up his paper and, cursing, threw it to the floor. He lit a cigarette and listened to the voices of Max Reddick and Minister Q, and knew they would be the last black voices he would ever hear. He thought of the Negro agents out there who believed their operations had only to do with Alliance Blanc.

THE SUN WAS BEGINNING to tilt into late afternoon in Leiden. Gray clouds appeared on the horizon. Max, who had debated but a moment before consigning Jaja's papers to the fireplace, now touched the pile with a match. He watched the flames reflecting from the sides of the copper pots and pans hooked from the brick facing. Now if something happened (and what could happen? Minister Q had been ready for something like this a long time) there would be no papers and the absence would be a sword of Damocles over the head of the Alliance and King Alfred. No papers and therefore no end; the Alliance and King Alfred, whatever happened, would always know that someone else knew. That fact would gnaw at white men in power for as long as they held it.

Michelle was using the telephone now, talking to her hus-

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band. Max listened to her voice as it came to him from the other room, now rising, now falling; now pleading, now sad; now promising, now resigned. Max stared out at the canal—the waters were now black. In the sky, gray cloud tumbled over gray cloud, and small trees bent before the rising wind, and flapped their leaves. The long conversation with her husband had ended; now Max heard Michelle talking to the French Embassy. The tone of her voice was different; it was that tone all Europeans use to address those beneath their social level.The tone was not haughty as much as it was sure of itself, sure that the message it conveyed would be followed to the letter.

It was nearly time to go. Max knew fear now. It reached down and dulled the razor-sharp pain that sliced through his lower body. Maybe, even at this moment, he thought in sudden, desperate fright, someone had invented the serum, the pill, the thing that would make cancer obsolete. Now it would do him no good. He took a deep breath. It was done and nobody had invented or discovered anything. *It is done.*

Even so Max snapped shut the lock on the case. It was empty, but he would still take it with him. Let the emptiness, when they discovered it, speak for itself. He wanted to see the expression on their faces. In a minute, as soon as Michelle finished her call, he would kiss her on the cheek and leave the house. He would plod through the courtyard, open the gate he had entered so innocently a few hours earlier, and step into the street. What would be there? Who would be there? If there were nothing and no one, he would get into the little German car, fascism on wheels, now so indispensible to too many people in too many places. You bought a VW and you made peace. It was no good saying you thought long and hard about it first. Once you laid down your money and drove away, the pact to forget the past was made. In the car he would pull out the Llama and put it in his pocket; it would made him feel better.

ALFONSE EDWARDS HAD WAKED that morning feeling unusually dull and heavy. He took a cold shower, dressed except for a jacket, then stood looking at the canal, waiting for his breakfast to come up. The night before he had signed for it for seven. In a few moments he heard footsteps thumping over the carpeted steps. He moved to his door and opened it. The boy, bearing his tray, smiled. "Good morning, Mr. Edwards."

"Good morning. How is the weather?"

"The sun is out and it is very fresh."

"Fine," Edwards said. "Just the way I like it."

"Yes, sir."

As he was eating, Edwards' eyes went once more to the plaque on the wall that gave a brief history of his hotel on the Heeren-Gracht. The building had been constructed only a dozen years after the first Dutch slave ship sailed into Jamestown. And here he was—three hundred forty-five years later—and on the side of the descendants of the doers of that deed, trying to undo it. Or trying to prevent the inevitable reaction to that deed which had been the background for so many others. He ripped a piece of brown bread in half and placed half a slice of Gouda on it, then poured his coffee.

But this was the day. Last night he had had Michelle followed from Paris to Leiden and watched her leave the train. Going to her secret home, where Ames had spent so much time with her. Then he went on to Amsterdam; it would be easy to pick up Reddick there, and Edwards' Amsterdam contact could help him with the completion of this assignment. He wished he knew exactly what he was to get, after he first—

It had been a long assignment. Africa and then Europe. In Europe there had been the constant suspicion, for every Negro new to a European city was said to be connected with Central. To allay that suspicion there had been the trips, the women, the writing, the fights, talking the jargon. But today that would be over. There would be another assignment after a bit of Rest and Recuperation, perhaps in Frankfurt, before he took on a new one. The new assignment would be another of what the people back home called dirty, filthy jobs. But those jobs protected America in ways Americans were too childish to realize. However, they did expect someone to protect them. From all terrors. The phone rang and Edwards felt a momentary tightening across his lean stomach. He picked it up and snapped off a quiet "Hello." Then he listened. "I'll be downstairs in ten minutes," he said, and he hung up. He put his jacket on. He did not know what to expect from Max Reddick, but the mission was crystal clear. From a corner of his suitcase Edwards lifted a stainless steel object three inches long. It was in a clear plastic container. The object was a high-pressure syringe and when the handle was pushed, a powerful, high-speed jet of *Rauwolfia serpentina* came forth, penetrating both clothes and skin, and attacked the central nervous system at once, depressing it until death came. The usual autopsy report was death by heart attack. Edwards made sure the plastic container was tight before placing it in his pocket. One agent had killed himself by carrying the syringe without its case.

Edwards walked quietly downstairs, and gaining the street, walked across it and looked at the canal. The city was just coming awake; ducks were floating around in search of food. He wondered just how many ducks had been killed during the night by the canal rats. He saw the car coming, a small black VW, and moved to the edge of the road. When it stopped he went around and got in, noticing that Roger was wearing dark glasses.

"Morning," Edwards said.

"Morning." Roger drove off. "He just got up. He's rented a car, a VW. Light gray."

They drove to the Leidseplein and parked. Now the other people would retreat to the consulate and wait. Reddick was theirs; State was bypassing.

"It's going to be a nice day," Roger said.

"Yes, the weather's been surprisingly good for a change."

Bicyclists went by in waves. More trams rolled by, and cars.

"There he is," Roger said.

"Let's go. Don't lose him."

They followed Max's car out Overtoom.

MAX PAUSED A LONG MOMENT before pulling the cord that opened the gate. He glanced behind him at the house; Michelle was at a window, watching. A white spot. He couldn't even tell now the color of her hair. He thought, s'long, Red. He pulled the cord and the gate swung open. He stepped into the street, pulling the door closed after him and leaning back against it automatically, to make sure it was firmly locked. He looked up and down. The street was quiet, almost empty. He scuttled across the walk, heart pounding, and hurriedly unlocked the car door. Inside,

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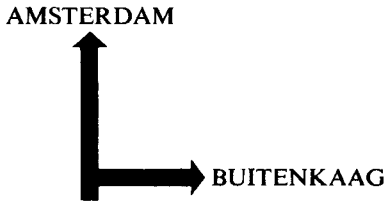
he relocked it and, flinching from the pain of the sudden sitting, groaned. His fingers were groping under the seat for the Llama. Where was it? Stiff, eager fingers ploughed into car-floor dirt; his heart threatened to tear through his rib cage. Where—? But now his fingers touched heavy metal with hard, precise lines, and he pulled the gun out, breathing with relief. He pulled the clip halfway out. Still loaded. A small gun, but that's what everyone got killed with in New York. Twenty-two's. A .25 would hurt only a little bit more. He put the gun in his pocket, checked the doors again and placed the case on the other seat. He started down the street and sped quickly through the city, so occupied with watching behind him that he squirted through two red lights. When he gained the main road he shifted into fourth. Better, he thought. That's better. With the coming of the gray clouds the temperature had dropped slightly and the wind had come up. He felt it tearing at the car. He drove rapidly. A big, black Mercedes rushed up behind him, blinked its lights and then howled past. Max noticed the black-on-white plates. The big "D" to one side.

Max was steering with one hand, and with the other wiping away the saliva that had formed upon his lips. Now, waves of nausea tugged at his stomach. He felt blood flowing lightly, but steadily and more than pain, he felt embarrassment. Like a broad, he thought. He opened his mouth and sucked in great gulps of air.

Europa 10 through western Holland is a narrow, well-tended four-lane highway. It flows over flat land except where there are long but gentle inclines which soon slant back down to sea level or below and continue on.

Max drove up one of those long gentle inclines and saw a sign:



The turnoff to Buitenkagg was at the crest of the incline. Max could see grass and a grove of small elm trees. He made a sudden decision to pull off the road and rest. Change the cotton. Take a pill. He snapped over the wheel and careened off Europa 10. Braking gently as he rushed downhill, he pulled up on the grass between the trees. Overhead and to his right, a lone car rushed toward Amsterdam under the deepening gray skies. Max shut off the ignition and silence, except for the wind, fell upon him.

He opened the door and reached for his pills and cotton. As he put his feet on the ground, he wished he were someplace where he could give himself another shot and lay down. At that moment there was for him no luxury like that of laying down. A gust of wind coughed across the fields and the trees leaned and their leaves flapped in frenzy and Max heard an alien noise brought, it seemed, by the wind itself; and he whirled, dropping the pills and cotton, and tugged frantically at his pocket where the gun was, pushing against the car door which was pressed against him by the wind. Before the black VW had stopped, Max recognized Roger and Edwards, and thought without surprise, Of course! Disarmingly he put toward them that face which had attracted the hurt and wounded all his life, the face for the Sheas, the Harrys. That face as they flowed toward him, their car engine still running. Max could almost count their steps. Gripping his gun he thought, this is the final irony. The coming of age, Negro set at Negro in the name of God and Country. Or was it the ultimate trap?

"Roger!" he cried out in fury and the wind burst over them in a mighty gust and Max, aiming the gun at Roger now, noticing their surprise (the face he had put on helped, intangibly, yet mightily); heard Roger shout, "Max man! Hold it! We just want to talk to you, man!" but fired at him low, once, twice, and saw him fold and start down, caught his shocked voice saying "Damn, man!" Soft, awful sound, his body hitting the ground while Edwards as if lifted by the wind came at him, smoothly, dark, long, uncoiling, and Max threw up his free hand to ward off the bright flash of silver which nevertheless grazed him, and in that same windblown, overcrowded second Max cleared his gun to fire at Edwards, aiming high this time, to shoot him right in the mouth, to stop up that mouth for good; but suddenly Edwards flying past him now, silver glittering in his hand, Roger in his final bounce upon the ground, the wind began to shriek in Max's ears and the running car engine became an army of snare drummers and Max felt the world closing in on him fast, pounding and squeezing him as he tumbled forward now, puzzled and frustrated and fearful, screaming, "Maggie! Maggie!"

Roger was pulling himself toward the car whimpering, "That fucker, trying to be a hero, a motherfucking hero. He was shooting for my balls!"

Edwards quickly pulled Max's body into his car and bent him over the steering wheel. He opened the briefcase. It was empty. Then with swift, practiced fingers he went over Max's body. Practiced fingers probe the rectum, separate the testicles, feel the penis for hidden objects. Edwards did not find microfilm; he found the wad of blood and pus-filled cotton; he found the morphine. Now he understood the syringe and needle. Without hesitation, he attached the needle to the syringe, then withdrew the morphine. He pushed up Max's sleeve and hit the big vein in his arm. Like the old days with the Narcotics Department he thought, still moving swiftly. Jazz musicians in Europe dying of overdoses administered by agents tired of chasing them. Better than heart attacks. There were getting to be too many people found dead of "heart attacks."

Edwards closed Max's car door and returned to his own car, kicking dirt over the trail of Roger's blood.

"C'mon," Roger called. "Hurry up, man. I'm hit bad."

"Where?" Edwards asked.

"I don't know. Near my balls. Did he get my balls? Look." Roger removed his hands. Edwards looked. "Did he?"

"I can't tell. Let's get going anyway."

Within a minute they were back on the northbound lane to Amsterdam. Angrily Edwards considered the papers. He'd have to stop and call and get Roger into other hands. Then he'd have to get back to Leiden. The woman. Goddamn it, he thought, and it might not even end there.

The preceding excerpts are from the novel The Man Who Cried I Am, *to be published by Little, Brown on October 25, 1967.* *Copyright ©1967 by John A. Williams.* *Mr. Williams' previous novels are* The Angry Ones, Night Song, *and Sissie. He is also the author of* This is My Country Too, *a nonfiction account of his travels across the U.S.*

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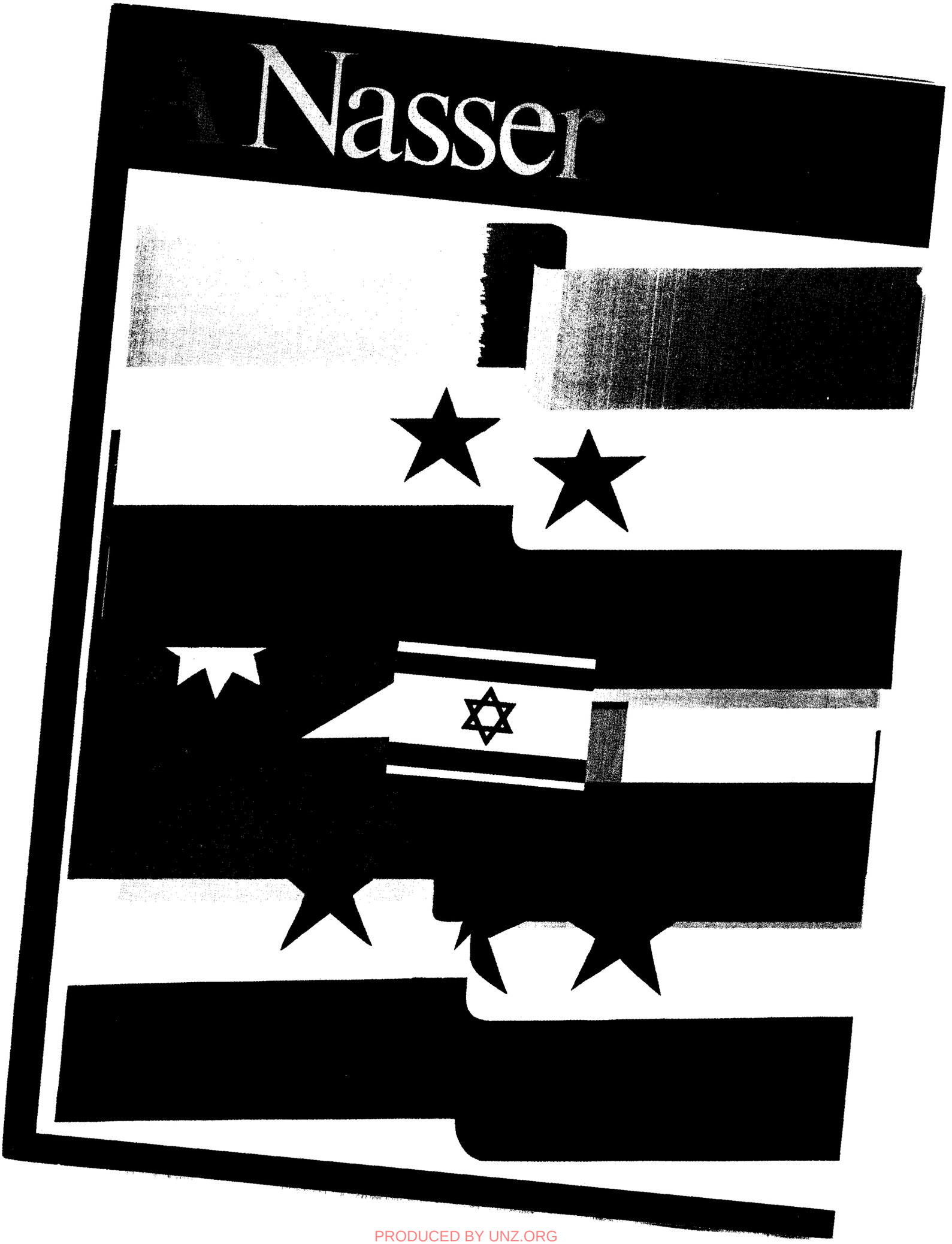

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Managing Editor Robert Scheer recently spent six weeks in the Middle East investigating the effects of the six-day war on both sides. He divided his time between Israel and Egypt and was the first American journalist allowed in Cairo after the war. In this first installment of a two-part essay, Scheer examines the historical background leading to the two Arab-Israeli wars. In Part Two, to appear in the next issue of RAMPARTS, *Scheer will discuss the current situation in Egypt and Israel and the prospects for peace in the Middle East, relying on his extensive interviews with high officials of both governments.*

[THE STORY OF TWO WARS]

"True revolutionaries never threaten a whole country with extermination. We have spoken out clearly against Israel's policy, but we don't deny her right to exist." *Fidel Castro in an interview with K. S. Karol, September 1967*

by Robert Scheer

IT WAS AUGUST 1967, and Gamal Abdul Nasser was a broken man as he strode slowly onto the stage at Cairo University to tell his assembled followers that the defeat of June 8th was every bit as serious as it appeared. At that moment he hardly seemed the "Arab strongman" described for so many years in the Western press. As he plodded through a speech he would rather not have given, Nasser epitomized the Arab reality; he was confused, embittered, no better able to surmount internal difficulty than he could fend off external danger. The rhetoric of the "Arab revolution" suddenly seemed terribly vacant. Yet, ironically, whatever hope remained for Arab progress seemed inextricably bound up with this military man whose career had produced two stunning military defeats.

Unfortunately, that hope was just as inextricably connected to the words "imperialism" and "Zionism"—words which have become unbelievably confused and entwined in their Middle Eastern usage. Both the 1956 Suez war and the latest "six-day war" have demonstrated that those in the Arab world who, like Nasser, claim to be progressives or socialists have been incapable of separating the needs of an Arab social revolution (of which the Western world is the serious opponent) from a frantic Arab nationalism preoccupied with Israel's existence. Nor is this failure solely the Arabs', for the policies of the Israeli government have often served to obscure the distinction. Until these needs are separated, the Middle East will continue to be plagued by the divisions which have produced three serious wars and which will, in less than another ten years, produce a fourth.

Regrettably, most of the commentary on the six-day war is written as if that event existed outside of history. It has been described as an almost biblical confrontation of mythical characters like Nasser and Dayan, motivated by rival gods on a plane outside of human experience and choice. The six-day war has come to be regarded as the heroic finale of an epic in which Good triumphs over Evil and outstanding problems are resolved. And if they are not resolved—this too seems somehow inevitable.

But the fact is that there was nothing inevitable about the six-day war any more than there was anything inevitable about the Suez war which preceded it by ten years. The same historical forces which produced both wars must somehow be comprehended and altered if another Mideast war is to be avoided. In the following I have attempted to describe Israeli-Arab relations and the essential dilemma of the Middle East as centered around the politically complex figure of Gamal Abdul Nasser.

I.

THE SUEZ WAR

NASSER CAME TO POWER in Egypt not through a serious social revolution but rather as a result of the disintegration of the regime of King Farouk. On July 22, 1952, a group of younger officers, including Nasser, rallied behind General Naguib and seized power through an ordinary military coup d'état. The officers possessed no coherent social program then or later, when on June 18, 1953, they declared Egypt a republic with Nasser as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior.

The only political motivation possessed by the "young officers" who carried off the coup that ousted King Farouk was a desire to rid the country of English colonial rule and to end the general corruption which had grown up around that rule. They were not preoccupied with the Palestine question except as part of the general indictment of King Farouk, who had started the 1948 war and left the Army to fire blank bullets while he pocketed the cash difference. The enemy at that time was not Zionism but English colonialism, still present in Egypt and still in control of its most precious resource—the Canal. Jean Lacouture, in a recent article in Le Nouvel Observateur, recalls:

> ". . . a careful reading of the Egyptian press, controlled by the military from 1952-54, gave relatively few opportunities for making reference to Israel: (since I participated at this time in some twenty press conferences during which Naguib, Nassar or Salah Salem answered questions from numerous foreign reporters) I can testify that remarks relative to the Palestine affair were extremely rare.

During the first interview granted me by Nasser in January 1954, the word Israel was not even mentioned. Responding

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to a question on the chances of realizing Arab unity, the leader of the "free officers"—who was not yet head of the government and therefore able to speak frankly—evoked only the divergences between republics and monarchies to be overcome, and made no allusion to the Palestine question."

Nasser took power in Egypt in 1954, in an atmosphere rife with irrational Arab nationalist sentiment, directed not against Israel or Zionism but against the British who still controlled the Suez. The fanatical, Islamist, rightist Moslem Brotherhood was demanding a direct Egyptian military confrontation with the English. Nasser pursued a more moderate tack, concluding the Anglo-Egyptian "Evacuation Agreement" on October 19, 1954. This was a compromise which provided for the return of the English military, scheduled to leave in 1956, if any Arab country were attacked. More importantly, it left a British civilian company in control of the Canal. The Brotherhood considered the agreement a betrayal, and Nasser crushed their attempted coup. The Baathists, who were already a major force in Syria, unleashed the first in a long series of attacks on Nasser from the "left," accusing him of being a Western stooge for signing the agreement.

The Evacuation Agreement with the British brought the issue of relations with Israel to the fore. The scheduled departure of the British from Suez meant, in effect, the removal of the buffer between Israel and Egypt, and it set in motion the events that were to lead to the Suez war.

EVENTS IN THE MIDEAST have always had a Great Power backdrop because of the oil in the region, and in the two years before Suez this factor was particularly important. The British were bent on maintaining their control of the Canal despite the compromise. More importantly, they, along with the United States and France, were determined to preserve Western hegemony over the area. The mechanism was the Baghdad Pact, and Premier Nuri es-Said of Iraq was its local instrument. Nasser had proclaimed a policy of neutralism modeled after Nehru's, but the West regarded it as a serious threat. When Nasser would not relent, the Baghdad Pact was enacted as a counter to his influence.

In addition to rejecting the Pact, Nasser hardened Western opposition to his regime by his emergence as a major neutralist figure at the Bandung conference (April 18, 1955) under the tutelage of Nehru. Neutralism was acceptable to the West in impoverished India but not at all in the oil-rich Mideast. Ironically, it was Chou En-Lai who, at this conference, introduced Nasser to the Russians and thus paved the way for the Soviet military and economic influence in the Mideast which sealed the Western opposition to Nasser. The West was now bent on Nasser's removal and the Suez crisis was not far off. The only unsettled question involved Israel's participation.

THOSE SYMPATHETIC TO ISRAEL'S position—in 1956 and since that time—have argued that Israel's participation in the Sinai campaign in alliance with France and England was necessary to her survival. However, the possibility must be examined that there were real opportunities for the peaceful resolution of Egyptian-Israeli relations and internal political forces both in Israel and in Egypt which favored such a solution. And if there was, in fact, such a possibility, then the role of external forces, namely the Western powers, has to be examined.

In a recent Commentary magazine article, Theodore Draper argues that Nasser's conflict with Israel at Suez was inevitable:

"As early as 1951, it was clear that a cycle of Arab raids and Israeli reprisals had started. By 1955, both Egypt and Israel were officially committed to one or the other phase of the cycle."

This sounds inevitable enough, until one recalls that Nasser was not really in charge in Egypt until 1954. Why then should he have been committed to the policy of his predecessors? Even Draper notes that these Arab raids had been sporadic and that no Arab government would accept responsibility for them. But Draper goes on to argue:

"In any event, something changed in 1955. In August it became known that Egypt was behind a campaign of sabotage and terrorism by groups known as fedayeen. As more and more fedayeen incidents piled up, Israeli reprisals intensified until small-scale battles were being waged."

In September of 1955, the now famous Soviet bloc-Egyptian arms deal was made which changed the whole Middle East situation and, in a sense, made Suez "inevitable." But what is it that Draper thinks "changed in 1955"? It is disappointing that he does not examine what the Egyptians think changed in 1955, as a possible clue to the shift in their policy.

IN A SPEECH IN OCTOBER 1955, Nasser had stated, "February 28th, 1955 was the turning point. This disaster was the alarm bell. We at once started to examine the significance of peace and the balance of power in this area."

The "disaster" of February '55 was the Israeli attack on an Egyptian garrison near the armistice border in the Gaza Strip.

In his book, *Egypt In Transition*, a work generally critical of Nasser, Jean Lacouture describes the Gaza raid as follows:

"On the 28th of February 1955 at five o'clock in the morning, an Israeli commando unit, made up of the boldest shock troops in an Army which has no lack of them, went about three miles into Egyptian territory near Gaza. They blew up the town's water-tower and machine-gunned the station, protecting themselves with a curtain of flame. An officer and 14 Egyptian troops, surprised in their sleep, and 9 terrified Arab civilians were killed . . . there were 43 killed altogether in an act of flagrant aggression."

Lacouture goes on to quote "one of the best informed local neutral observers" who said of the raid: "The Israeli attack on the 28th of February cannot be compared with the previous acts committed on both sides, and it opens a new phase—that of sizable military operations in a zone which has long been living in a state of insecurity."

Egypt saw the February attack as marking a new "hard" line in Israeli politics. Ben-Gurion, a "hard," had retired from office in December 1953, and Moshe Sharett, who replaced him as Prime Minister, was thought by the Arabs to be a much more "realistic" Zionist. But 11 days before the raid, Ben-Gurion had ended his retirement to take up the post of Israeli Defense Minister, and the raid under his auspices confirmed the Egyptian view that the "hards" had taken over in Israel.

In April of this year, Nasser's closest confidant, Al Ahram editor Heykal, quoted a conversation between Nasser and the U.S. ambassador to Egypt which took place on March 3, 1955, and in which Nasser stated:

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"Since the revolution, I have reduced the Army budget and centered my efforts around social services. I feel today that I have made a mistake. Until this very moment, I still believed that the dispute between Israel and us was one of self-power and that economic and social progress would have the greater effect in the long run, but now I believe that I must give the Army the budget much more than I have in the past. I cannot check Israel with schools, hospitals and factories alone. If I were to build schools, hospitals and factories without sufficient armed force, Israel could seize all we have built at any time."

Erskine Childers, the pro-Arab Middle East expert, offers the following comment on the fedayeen:

"The clamor inside Egypt, not least inside the Army, and among refugees in the Gaza Strip, reached dangerous levels. In August, to meet the public demand for some kind of action and to demonstrate to Mr. Ben-Gurion that Arab lives were precious, Nasser took a fateful decision—to organize and publicly announce a paramilitary unit of commandos, fedayeen. Enlisted from among the refugees in Gaza, they were trained for sabotage . . . The decision is wholly understandable. But I shall never believe that it was other than immoral . . . The fedayeen were murderous and terrifying to ordinary Israelis—quite as terrifying as the Israeli military assaults that begot them were to Arabs."

There had been, of course, repeated border clashes between Israeli and Egyptian forces during the year of Nasser's rule preceding the February Gaza raid. But these were uniformly minor skirmishes, involving only a few casualties—and an occasional theft of goats, sheep and camels. The February 28 raid, however, represented a major escalation of the Egyptian-Israeli conflict—one that had all the appearances of premeditation by the Israeli government itself. As the London Times editorialized on March 2, 1955:

"It seems difficult to understand why the Israeli government should have put itself so plainly in the wrong unless its intention is to *serve some sort of notice upon the Western Powers of the troubles that are likely to follow the arming of the Arab States*" (Emphasis added).

And, as the London Times' editorial noted, one of the major sources of irritation to the Israeli government at this time was the fate of two Jewish members of a "spy ring" captured in Cairo in late 1954, and executed just four weeks before the Gaza raid. We now know, because of the "Lavon affair," that the officers of the Israeli Army were behind the sabotage efforts of this ring—and that its activities were approved by high officials of the Israeli government. This guaranteed Egyptian support of the fedayeen, which, along with the more basic failure on the part of both sides to resolve the refugee problem, cast the die not only for '56 but '67 as well.

[THE LAVON AFFAIR]

WE STILL KNOW VERY LITTLE about the development of Israel's policies during the two years before Suez because much of what was important took place in a highly secretive atmosphere and the principals involved have been unwilling to discuss it. However, enough has been revealed by now to provide the rough outline of the story. The two themes are the disagreement within the Israeli government over policy towards the Arabs and the role of the Western powers in actively favoring one of the factions.

Israel was split politically between those who still thought some accommodation with the Arabs was possible through non-military means, and those who favored the hard line of military initiative. Prime Minister Moshe Sharett favored the former tendency and Ben-Gurion the latter. It was in a broader sense a dispute between Sharett and the Civilian Foreign Office on the one hand, and the Israeli Defense Ministry and Ben-Gurion on the other. The importance of the split came to light only four years after Suez, when the "Lavon affair" rocked Israeli politics. Although most of the details of that affair have been kept secret, there are some important leads.

Ben-Gurion, who retired in December 1953, had been both Prime Minister and Minister of Defense. Upon his retirement, the two posts were split, and the Defense Ministry went to a handpicked Ben-Gurion protege, Pinhas Lavon. Lavon, like his mentor, was a "hard" on the question of relations with the Arabs. But the position of Prime Minister went to Moshe Sharett, who was far more hopeful than Ben-Gurion had been of finding some basis of agreement with the new Egyptian ruler.

Erskine Childers put the new mood of Israel this way:

". . . In early 1954 it was widely felt by Israeli observers outside Mr. Ben-Gurion's circle that the new Egyptian leader, while obviously anti-Israel, did not want war and might even be the most realistic figure available for negotiations."

But two startling events quickly disturbed this more optimistic prospect: the announced capture in Cairo of a "Zionist spy network," and the seizure of an Israeli ship, Bat Galim, when it attempted to pass through the Suez. These events played into the hands of the Israeli and Arab "hards" who were determined to convince their countrymen that peace was not possible. The capture of the "Zionist ring" was presumed by most Israelis to be another instance of Arab provocation. The "spies" were executed in January 1955, and the outcry in Israel provided the rationale for the February attack on Gaza. But it now seems clear that there was such a ring, and if there was any provocation it was engineered by the Israelis under the direction of Lavon.

Summarizing the Lavon affair, S. Z. Abramov, a General Zionist Party member of the Knesset, wrote in Commentary (February 1961):

"The full story of the circumstances leading to Lavon's resignation was not told, nor is it likely to be disclosed now. What we do know is that sometime in May 1954, a senior Army officer issued an order calling for a certain action which ended in disaster. This action was of such importance that the officer who ordered it should only have done so with the approval of the Chief of Staff (then Moshe Dayan) or of Lavon . . ."

The officer in question claimed that it was Lavon who approved the action, but Lavon categorically denied any knowledge of the event. The editors of Commentary added the following footnote: "The most common supposition is that it was a sabotage or espionage action in Cairo."

In a November 1965 article in the Reporter magazine, Claire Sterling reported a conversation with Ben-Gurion about the Lavon affair, which more narrowly identified the incident with the arrests in Cairo:

"He [Ben-Gurion] does not know or care, he told me, whether it was the then Defense Minister Pinhas Lavon or a certain senior officer who, in 1954, gave the order to blow up the USIS libraries in Cairo and Alexandria so as to turn the

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United States against Nasser—an action which led to the arrest and execution of two Israeli agents in Egypt."

It has been suggested that the decision to send the Bat Galim through Suez was part of the Lavon affair. It was an important escalation of tension, since no Israeli-owned ship had attempted passage since 1949, although Egypt had allowed over 60 ships not owned by Israel but with Israeli cargoes to pass between 1951 and 1954.

[THE FRENCH ALLIANCE]

WHILE THESE EVENTS REMAIN clouded, their significance is clear on one point. In the spring of 1954, a segment of the Israeli Defense Ministry, with the approval of Lavon, pursued a policy which sabotaged the dovelike efforts of Prime Minister Sharett. A few months later, in August of 1954, Israeli Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan reaffirmed this trend when he visited France to negotiate with the French military, and linked Israel's cause with that of the French colonialists. He declared, "We are up against a common enemy—you on the flanks and we face to face, in the front line."

Dayan was, along with Shimon Peres, the "architect" of Israel's alliance with France. France was seen as the only stable source of arms which other powers were unwilling to supply to Israel. And general reliance on French and British support for the existence of Israel as a state was a necessity so long as Israel's Arab neighbors continued to deny Israel's right to exist and, despite the peace settlement, initiated hostile acts and posed a constant threat of renewed war. However, French and British motives in supporting Israel were far from altruistic, and the price of support was high. The French and British governments were at a moment of crisis in their African and Mideastern empires, and bent on one last desperate effort to crush the anti-colonialist movements which threatened their rule. Nasser represented the most threatening of these revolutionaries. He supported the Algerian revolution against French rule and had declared that he intended to push the English out of Suez. East of Suez, the English already saw Nasser as an imminent threat to their oil exploitation in Arabia.

It is important to realize that the alliance with the West—with France especially—was not the result of a momentary congruence of interests in 1956. The alliance had been quietly and carefully constructed from 1954 on. The Israeli scholar Dr. Michael Bar-Zohar demonstrated this strikingly in his *Bridge Across the Mediterranean*. Simha Flapan, the Israeli editor of New Outlook, concurred with Bar-Zohar's thesis:

"The author proves, on the basis of convincing facts, that a joint Franco-Israeli political and military strategy had already been involved back in 1954, i.e., before the fedayeen activities and the Israeli reprisal operations, which reached the high tension point only in 1955, and prior to the Egyptian-Czech arms deal...announced in September 1955."

In fact, the involvement with France had begun earlier than 1954. Even before the outbreak of hostilities in Algeria and Nasser's accession to power, Flapan wrote, Israel had begun to line up with France:

"On three consecutive occasions in 1952, Arab politicians applied to Israel asking it to support a call for a special U.N. assembly to discuss the Tunisia problem. A minimum of 31 votes was needed for the application to be passed. But in order not to harm its friendship with France, Israel refused on each of the three occasions to back the Arab demand."

The alliance was cultivated through the contact of the Israeli and French Defense Ministries—not their Foreign Offices. The Israeli Defense Ministry, particularly after Ben-Gurion came back into the government, furthered this policy, despite the misgivings of Sharett.

Again quoting Flapan in New Outlook:

"It should be recalled here that until the beginning of 1955 the Israeli-Egyptian border was relatively calm, compared to the Israeli-Jordan border. Throughout 1954, contacts between Israel and Egypt were maintained through various mediators. These were brought to an abrupt end with the 'security mishap' as the result of which Defense Minister Pinhas Lavon was ousted to make way for Ben-Gurion."

Eleven days later, Israel's reprisal raid against Gaza was launched, and events moved inexorably to Suez. The famous Czech arms deal was not concluded with Nasser until late September 1955, but it has been used as the major justification for Israel's participation in Suez. But as Bar-Zohar, who had the cooperation of the Defense officials involved, and who supports Israel's Suez policy, states:

"This idea [military cooperation against Egypt] had in fact been bandied about for a long while previously. For many months the possibility of joint military action against Egypt, the common enemy, was raised at unofficial meetings of French and Israeli leaders. Already in June 1955 the idea of a joint attack on Nasser was put forward in talks between Bourges-Manoury, the then Minister of Interior, and Shimon Peres."

Peres was the Director General of the Israeli Ministry and a Ben-Gurion man. According to Bar-Zohar these discussions were held in secret by the military because Sharett, a loyal supporter of the United Nations and a believer in international law, "was most anxious to avoid the storm of opposition likely to arise among the Afro-Asian states—Israel's potential friends, who might be in a position to mediate between it and the Arabs—and firmly opposed the idea of preventive war."

Towards the end of '55 and into the spring of '56 the fedayeen raids, now supported by Nasser, increased in intensity. This only "proved" Ben-Gurion's point. The Israeli military became committed to the idea of preventive war and, over Sharett's disapproval, were negotiating for new French arms and support for such a war. On June 18th, 1956, Sharett resigned in opposition to the policy and Ben-Gurion replaced him. In his first speech as Prime Minister, Ben-Gurion said: "I have reached the conclusion that it is now essential for the sake of the state, to achieve complete coordination, as far as possible, between the Foreign and Defense Ministries." And now that he was in command of both, it would no longer be a problem. On October 10, 1956, Shimon Peres signed a Franco-Israeli agreement on joint action.

[A MISSED OPPORTUNITY]

THE FRENCH WERE NOT ALONE among the colonial powers in working to prevent an Israel-Arab settlement. Dom Mintoff, who was the Prime Minister of Malta during this period, has implicated the English government in similar efforts. Mintoff was interviewed by the Israeli newspaper Ma'ariv in 1961 and reported that in January 1956, while on a private visit to Egypt, he had invited

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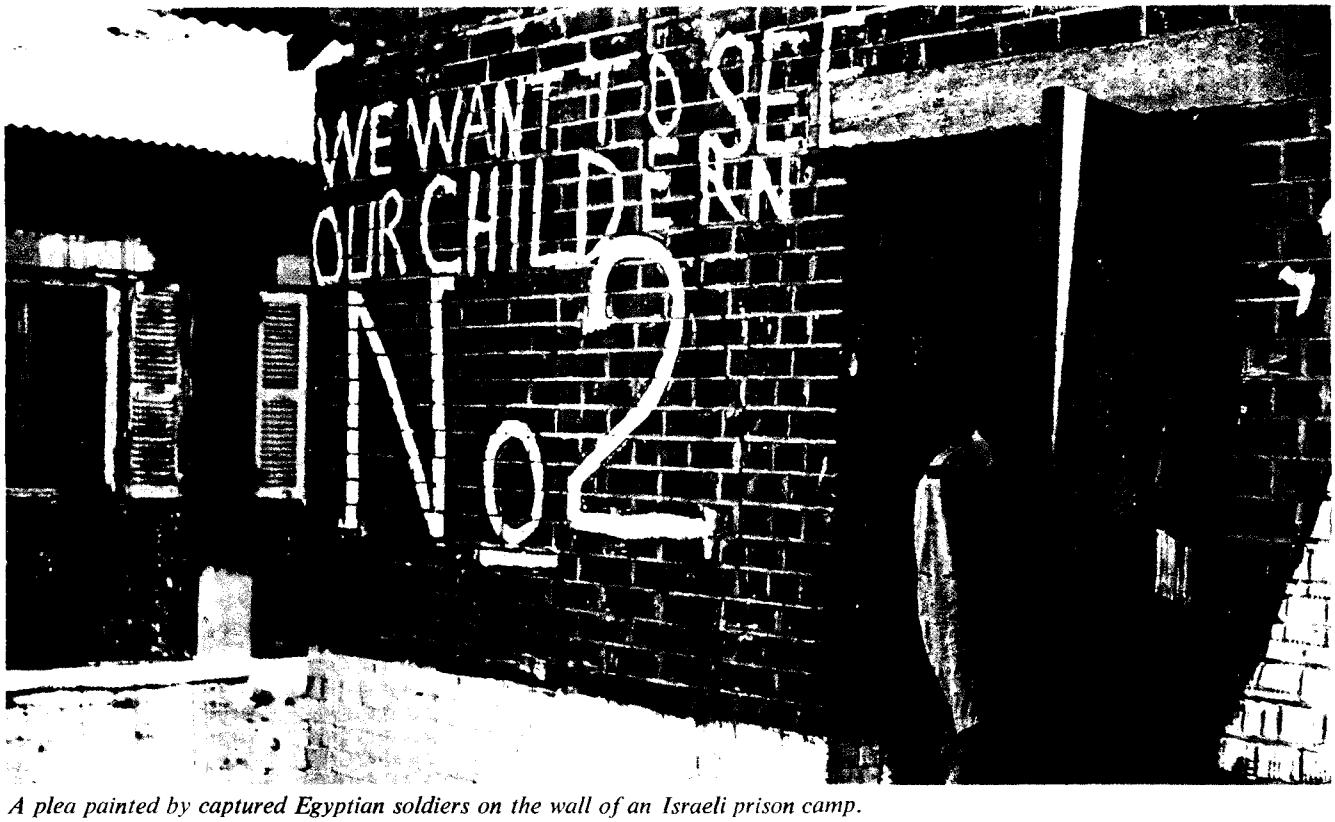
Arab wall posters left behind in Israel-occupied Gaza. Palestinian Liberation Front Leader Shukairy's poster partially obscures the one of Nasser.

The Star of David painted over the monument of the Palestinian Liberation Front.



A plea painted by captured Egyptian soldiers on the wall of an Israeli prison camp.

Photographs by Robert Scheer

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Shukairy's anti-Israel propaganda paintings from Gaza.

Nasser to spend his holiday in Malta and had asked him, "Why should you not use this opportunity to meet Israeli representatives, as if by coincidence, for secret talks?"

Mintoff reported that Nasser accepted the suggestion and agreed to a meeting in April 1956. Mintoff informed the British ambassador in Cairo of the forthcoming visit, and when he returned to Malta was called for an "urgent" talk with the British governor. Mintoff was told to call off the Nasser visit, and when he challenged the governor's authority he was given a copy of a cable marked "top secret" from the British foreign office to the governor which said: "He [Nasser] must be told that his visit is not convenient at the present time because of internal matters now needing attention. Verify that such will be the explanation in Mintoff's letter . . . be sure to verify also that Mintoff should understand that he is not a traveling salesman for peace."

Peace in 1956 would not have helped the French or English reassert their authority in the Middle East. Ma'ariv, commenting on the Mintoff incident, said that at the time, undercover negotiations had begun in Europe between the Israelis and Egyptians, during which the Egyptians said that their military junta was too weak to reach an open normalization of relations with Israel but wanted "to maintain a tranquil border to create direct contact in a European capital as a base for clearing controversial matters or conflicts. Egypt was to agree to the passage of Israeli cargoes through the Suez Canal; though not under the Israeli flag."

The French and British policy was especially unfortunate because it seems that, even after the Israeli raid of February 1955, there were still possibilities of a reversal of the trend towards war. According to Ma'ariv, Sharett enthusiastically supported the undercover negotiations as a chance to break the ring of Arab hostility against Israel "but that the Defense Ministry acted to destroy such prospects."

Sharett's more conciliatory views are alluded to by Middle East expert Jean Lacouture who notes the existence of a dialogue between Nasser and Sharett, before Sharett resigned, through labor members of the British parliament. Sharett was known to the Arabs for having advocated partial reparation to the refugees in 1949, and the topic of these new feelers was presumably the refugee question. Lacouture points out that while little is known of those overtures, "One of the persons involved in these probings told me that at the conclusion of the last conversation that he had with the Egyptian Prime Minister, to whom he had communicated the report of a previous conversation with the leader of the Israeli government, Nasser asked him to convey 'friendly regards to Mr. Sharett.' "

We do not know what progress Sharett had made, but his efforts were undercut by Ben-Gurion.

In the fall of 1955, Ben-Gurion campaigned on the hard line and was aided in this not only by Nasser's support of the fedayeen but by Egypt's extension of the blockade of Elath. Ben-Gurion spoke as if it were past the point of no return, and it seemed that way to most observers. But Lacouture again reports the following interview with Nasser in November 1955 (presumably after Ben-Gurion resumed the premiership on Nov. 2):

> "This time it was Nasser who broached the question of Israel by noting the Czech arms deal which put him 'on an equal footing with Israel.'
>
> LACOUTURE: *To negotiate from a position of strength?*

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NASSER: *I think that the offers made by Mr. Eden in view of returning to the plan of partition of 1947 can serve as a basis for discussion . . .*

LACOUTURE: *Shouldn't you think rather that, in the spirit of the Arabs, Israel must be suppressed as a state and reduced to the condition of a kind of Jewish Vatican?*

NASSER: *No. What we Egyptians ask is that this state should not violate the rights of the Arabs. We wish that these rights be recognized by it as by others.*"

If this was really the position of the Egyptians and they were willing to work towards implementing it, then indeed an important prospect for peace was lost by Ben-Gurion's hard line.

And finally, according to Eric Rouleau, Le Monde's Egyptian correspondent and the foreign journalist closest to Nasser, there were opportunities for settlement extending through the summer of 1956 which were not picked up by the Ben-Gurion government:

". . . the Egyptians seemed to be in a conciliatory mood. On August 6, 1956, a Hebrew broadcast of Cairo Radio warmly congratulated Israel for her 'restrained attitude on the Suez issue and for refusing to let herself be used as a tool of the Western powers in the present conflict.' Twenty days later, President Nasser's Minister of State (and future Prime Minister) Ali Sabri surprisingly declared at Geneva that 'as long as there is no shooting war, Egypt will allow Israeli vessels to pass through the Suez Canal as long as they carry no war materials.' "

The nature of the Ben-Gurion-Sharett split was given more substance with the release late last year of the text of a speech Sharett had given before a closed group of Mapai members in November 1957, one year after Suez. In this speech, Sharett clearly took issue with the foreign policy views of the Ben Gurion-Dayan group without citing them by name. Sharett attacked with special emphasis the view that "there was nothing that could be done, or that it didn't matter what we did" in dealing with the Arabs. "I claim," Sharett said, "that there is importance both positive and negative in what we do, from the viewpoint both of bringing peace closer or of pushing it further away." Sharett criticized the hard-line view that "the Arabs only understand the language of force . . . [and that] the state of Israel must from time to time demonstrate clearly that it is strong and able and ready to use force in the most emphatic and efficient manner."

Sharett indicated his commitment to a different posture as follows:

"We must not, even for one moment, stop thinking of peace. This is not only a political consideration, but also a long-range security consideration. Without detracting from the importance of current security factors, we always have to include the matter of peace among the elements to be considered. We must restrain our retaliations. The question remains whether it has actually been proven that acts of retaliation solve the security problems for which they were intended."

All of this should not be taken to mean that Nasser does not share responsibility for Suez, or that Israeli fears of the Arab world's hostility as reflected in the fedayeen raids and the blockade of Tiran were unwarranted. Obviously, Nasser failed to lead Egypt out of the mad Arab preoccupation with Israel which he had inherited from the feudal rulers. In this he was clearly intimidated by the attacks of Nuri es-Said, the Iraqi

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leader who charged that Nasser was becoming soft on the Palestine question and was pro-Israel. This pattern of attack was to be repeated in the period preceding the six-day war by the Jordanians. It is a favorite ploy of Arab right-wing governments to cover for their alliances with the West through militant opposition to Israel.

Once he accepted the crude formulation that the mere existence of Israel was a manifestation of imperialism, Nasser hopelessly blurred the significance of that term and obfuscated his later condemnation of Israel's collusion with imperialism during the Suez campaign. By failing to draw this distinction, he committed the Egyptian revolution to a disastrous policy of alliance with the corrupt, reactionary Arab regimes against Israel, and to reliance on the very world powers that wanted to dominate the Middle East. It committed him to the morally indefensible and militarily disastrous policy of working to eliminate Israel instead of imperialism from the Middle East.

However, the Ben-Gurion-Peres-Dayan axis and its French and British friends must bear a great share of the responsibility for the disaster. From 1954 to Suez, Ben-Gurion, Peres and Dayan worked steadily to commit Israel to a course of relying on a militaristic policy and an alliance with the West. Elements in the French and British governments actively encouraged this course and effectively cut out all the possibilities for an Egyptian-Israeli reconciliation.

After Suez there could be no peace with the Arab revolution, barring the most dramatic of reversals by all parties. The fateful step was taken not only without fully probing the alternatives but by actually rebuffing any signs of reasonableness on the part of the Nasser regime in its formative years. The men around Ben-Gurion accepted the political perspectives of the French and English, not merely their military support: for they defined Arab weakness as desirable and necessary to Israel's defense. This attitude placed Israel squarely in opposition to the Arab revolution.

Theodore Draper summarized the collusion of the Suez gambit:

> "For the British it was an opportunity to get back into the Canal Zone which they had just evacuated, and to reassert themselves in their old imperial domain. The French were as interested in punishing Nasser for helping the Algerian rebels as in getting back control of the Canal.
>
> Dayan says that it is doubtful whether Israel would have moved against Egypt on October 29, 1956, if it had not known that the British and French were planning an operation of their own two days later."

Until Suez there was really no basis for pinning the "imperialist" label on Israel. True, she had benefitted from the intervention of the West through the Balfour Declaration and other agreements, but one could find similar incidents to show collusion between Arab nationalists and the West. It was obvious that Israel had won its independence from the British; it was not given. Until Suez, the Israelis had made it on their own, and could legitimately claim the status of a liberation or independence movement. If anti-colonialism can be defined as a people with a national identity attempting to assert essential control over their political and economic lives, then the Jews who migrated to Israel and those who lived there were certainly anti-colonialist. Nor should the fact that they were essentially emigrants affect this characterization, for the dispersal and degradation of the Jews was forced upon them by larger "colonial" powers, and they were now acting to right that wrong. It is true that the creation of Israel conflicted with Palestinian nationalism, but rival nationalisms are often in such conflict.

But with Suez, Arab charges about "Zionist imperialism" first began to have a ring of truth. Israeli-Egyptian relations were defined during the critical years 1954-1956, and there can be no reconciliation unless the lessons of that period are learned. Israel's relation to the West in the Suez crisis was the fateful moment.

[THE REVOLUTION NASSER NEVER MADE]

BEFORE SUEZ, THE CONCEPT of "Arab revolution" meant little more than the unity of the Arab people against colonialism. Packed into the omnibus-concept of "Arab revolution" were vague and often contradictory goals: freeing the Arab nations from colonial rule, destroying Israel, modernizing the Arab world, restoring former Arab greatness, and building socialism in order to emancipate the Arab masses. Proponents of the "Arab revolution" had yet to confront the classic dilemma of liberation movements in the modern world. The phrase "Arab revolution" really contained two distinct components: a Nationalist revolution and a Socialist revolution; and the two were neither synonymous nor necessarily compatible. The Nationalist revolution stressed the Arab language, Arab greatness, independence, cultural cohesion and, above all, Islamic traditions. The Socialist revolution implied economic reforms, class struggle, planning and modernization. During the struggle for liberation from the colonialist powers, the two revolutions coincided and they continued to complement one another on subsequent issues, such as Western oil exploitation. But on the most important issue—relations with Israel—the two components of "Arab revolution" came increasingly into conflict during the years between Suez and the six-day war.

The post-Suez '50s was a period of consolidation in Egypt coupled with a turning away from the Palestine problem to exporting the "revolution" to other Arab countries. Until Suez, Nasser had been floundering as a potential leader of the Middle East without any clear idea of Egypt's relation to the Asiatic Arabs. The preoccupation before Suez had been one of ridding Egypt of colonial influence, but his dramatic confrontations with the West had produced the first real outpouring of popular support for Nasser throughout the Arab world. Suez reinforced the image, for he had stood against the powers and retained the Canal.

In the aftermath of Suez, the West, including the U.S., boycotted Egypt's goods, but Nasser survived with the aid of the Eastern bloc. Nasser became the center of Arab independence, far outstripping his U.S.-sponsored rivals in Iraq, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. But the content of Nasser's program for the Mideast was still not at all clear. Nasser simply rode with the momentum of his image as the Arab unifier, strong enough to withstand the entreaties of the foreigners. In all of this there was only the vaguest of references to a program to meet the needs of either Egyptians or the Arab masses. Nasserism was at the height of its popularity precisely because it was so ill-defined. To some it meant modernization: to others, Arab nationalism and unity, and to still others the hope of social change. But as long as it remained a confused abstraction, there were few defectors from the Nasser celebration.

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The union with Syria marked a turning point in the character of Nasser's revolution. It was formed at the height of his popularity, in February 1958. The union was doomed to failure, for the content of "Arab unity" was just as undefined as the content of "Arab revolution." The more Nasser struggled with Syrian problems during the three and a half years of "union," the more he became convinced that the "Arab revolution" had to involve some kind of social revolution. The final breakdown of the union in 1961 made this a conviction for Nasser. As Peter Mansfield, the Sunday Times (of London) correspondent, wrote:

> "Before the union with Egypt, the Syrian economic system had been predominantly laissez-faire capitalist and there was a powerful and experienced business and merchant class that bitterly opposed the progress towards socialism. When part of the Syrian Army rebelled against the union in August 1961, this class immediately supported the secession...
>
> Syria's secession from the UAR in 1961 gave Nasser a jerk to the left because he believed that it had been engineered by the capitalist classes in Syria with sympathetic support from their Egyptian counterparts, against the extension of UAR socialism."

Mansfield quotes Nasser as saying:

> "We fell victims to a dangerous illusion . . . We always refused to make peace with imperialism, but we made the mistake of making peace with reaction . . . Closely connected with this illusion is another illusion, that it is possible to reach a compromise with reaction on national grounds . . . We have seen how in Syria, capitalism, feudalism and opportunism joined forces with imperialism to wipe out the gains of the masses, and to strike at the socialist revolution."

[ARAB SOCIALISM]

THE FIRST MAJOR STEPS towards Egyptian socialism had been taken in June and July just before the August 1961 break with Syria. The government took over the country's total import trade and much of the export trade. All banks and insurance companies plus approximately 3300 business establishments were nationalized. New tax laws maximized income at 5000 pounds per year, and a quarter of all company profits had to be distributed to workers. Some of these measures were to apply to Syria as well—a factor in the coup there.

The ideology behind the reform was presented by Nasser in his National Charter of May 1962. The Charter stipulated government ownership of the economic infrastructure as well as the heavy mining industry, leaving most light industry in the private sector, but heavily restricted. The government controlled all foreign trade, banks and insurance companies. Agricultural land was limited to 100 *feddans* per family.

But Nasser strongly resisted a forced growth modeled along Stalin's lines. The Egyptian model has been more like Tito's or, in some aspects, even that of the British Labor Party. Private light industry has been encouraged and any heavy taxation of consumer goods has been avoided. As Mansfield has pointed out, it is the massive rise of consumption in the cities which is partly responsible for Egypt's economic troubles. But this lenient version of socialism is the policy which fitted in with Nasser's aim of maximum unity or, in a less charitable vein, the path of least resistance.

There can be no doubt that Egypt has witnessed what Marxists would call the dismantling of the bourgeoisie and a marked subordination of the private sector to overriding government prerogatives. But, although Egypt has five-year plans, she does not have a governmental cadre or party to implement them. Nasser rewarded the lower class in Egypt on a scale unprecedented in the Arab world, but he failed to organize those classes into a conscious political force concerned with preserving their gains against those who threatened them. Nasser's policy of national unity has consistently de-emphasized class divisions and has instead stressed nationalistic aspirations. The Achilles heel of the Egyptian social revolution has not been in its economic design but rather in the lack of any concrete political force to push it through.

It was in this sense that Israel continued to be important to Egyptian life. The "outside danger," Nasser claimed, was what made "modernization" necessary within Egypt. In this sense, anti-Zionism conveniently created less dissension than the angrier and more divisive cry for social justice. It was argued that social reforms were necessary for modernization which in turn was necessary to withstand the threat of Israeli and Western imperialism.

The Arab socialist union which was begun after the collapse of an earlier experiment in national union was a half-hearted attempt to get out of this impasse. But it never got off the ground. It failed primarily because the military was threatened by a politicalization of the society, as were a whole class of government bureaucrats whose easy life was threatened by the socialist ideas of self-sacrifice and efficiency. What these people felt about the danger of communism had nothing to do with freedom of individual or political dissent but rather the challenge to individual corruption. Nasser is applauded in Egypt because he is not personally corrupt and indulgent. For most other officials corruption has always been a way of life. Revolutionary politics threatened this new bureaucracy as much as it had the old, and Nasser was unwilling to risk a confrontation with those who ran his government and Army.

Nasser's Egyptian revolution remained mired at a point which Castro's Cuba surpassed in 1961: the problem was how to move from the reform of the traditional political and economic way of life to the foundation of new institutions and the education of the bulk of the population to support and work with those institutions.

To make the Cuban revolution, Fidel Castro destroyed Batista's Army; but Nasser preserved the Army of King Farouk. Even the crushing of the attempted coup of the Moslem Brotherhood and the pro-Naguib officers in 1953-54 failed to produce a fundamental reorganization of the Army. It existed over the next 14 years as an island of reaction in continuous mockery of the hope of an Egyptian revolution. The changes which had occurred in the civilian life of Egypt through the land reform, nationalization decrees and redistribution of income left the military untouched. The officers continued to live a corrupt, feudal and exploitative existence. It is not surprising, then, that one of Nasser's top generals was found dead drunk in a Cairo hotel during the first days of the six-day war, or that the first demand of the Egyptian officers captured by the Israelis was that they not be grouped with their men, and the second that their trunks of clothing be looked after. They were not, however, as treacherous as the "militant revolutionary" Syrian officers who locked their men in bunkers, from the outside, and then took off for Damascus.

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The contradictions of Egyptian life are staggering. For all the social reforms, the military remained a cohesive, privileged class bent on serving its own interests. Nasser's vision of a social revolution in the Arab world was dependent upon an Egyptian Army that preserved in its own ranks the very distinctions of privilege that it vowed to eliminate in the world outside. Similarly, a government bureaucracy which is corrupt and self-serving can hardly export a revolution which it has yet to import.

In the '60s Nasser attempted to implement a foreign policy revolution as the equivalent of an internal swing left. Egyptian foreign policy no longer centered upon the Palestine question —something which could well have been interpreted as a healthy sign. Instead, it concentrated on challenging the Arab monarchies and the Western governments behind them. The fight centered on Yemen but it was really aimed at Saudi Arabia and the oil-rich Arab south.

THE MIDEAST CONTAINS between 60 and 65 per cent of the world's proven oil resources, and at the moment accounts for a quarter of the world's current production. Ironically, the countries which are culturally and politically the weakest tend to be most favorably endowed with oil. Algeria in '63 produced 24 million tons, and tiny little Kuwait produced an astounding 97 million. Overpopulated Egypt had 5.5 million tons, vacant Saudi Arabia 81 million. Iraq accounted for 56 million; Syria's production was negligible. The "Arab unity" which Nasser calls for would at some point obviously involve pooling oil resources, in the self-interest of those countries which are not richly endowed. But, to the degree that it is identified with social revolution, "Arab unity" appeals to the populations of even those oil-rich countries which are controlled by feudalistic regimes which hoard this one source of wealth. All the Arab dreams for the eventual development of the region center in one way or another on the utilization of this oil once it is freed from Western exploitation. For this reason, "Arab unity" is the *bête noire* of those Western powers that have had their own way in oil exploitation. For if a real Arab nation should ever come into being, it would demand the return of its birthright. This is the threat of Nasserism.

The Palestine question is a political football in the struggle between the "progressives" and the "monarchs." The "progressives" use the Palestine question as a lever against the "reactionary" regimes which they accuse of being allies of Israel—and of not doing enough for the cause because of their connections with Western imperialists who are allied with Israel. The "reactionary" regimes, using the Islamic "Holy War" cry as a means of obscuring the reality of the Western presence in their own countries and the demands of their own people, claim that it is Nasser who is an ally of Israel; thus Israel is convenient for both sides.

In the post-Suez period, the main Anglo-American concern with Nasser resulted from his leap into the oil-rich Arabian south where, through the vehicle of the Yemen war, he has become a direct threat to the feudal regime of Saudi Arabia, and the oil-rich sheikdoms of that area.

There are many criticisms which can be made of the Egyptian involvement in Yemen, and in fact one finds few Egyptians who feel altogether sanguine about the affair. They blundered into a tribal society from which they were culturally alienated and this caused them to heap error upon error. But neither the British nor the Americans have been worrying about these moral and cultural issues. It is, rather, the presence of a Nasserite, anti-colonialist thrust in southern Arabia, where much of the oil is found, which disturbs the West.

On May 5th Al Ahram editor Heykal defined the U.S. role as follows:

> "The Egyptian intervention in Yemen touched upon a sensitive point of the American interests if not upon all the sensitive points. It touched upon natural resources, because it created a revolutionary force represented by the Egyptian military presence in the heart of the Arab peninsula—the center of Arab oil . . . and because the Egyptian military presence, so close to the southern entrance of the Red Sea, in addition to its undisputed control of the Suez Canal and the northern entrance of this sea, meant that Egypt was actually in full control of this sea which is considered an indispensable route between the West and the East. It also touched upon America's most important friends in the area—those of the Saudi Arabian throne—because the Egyptian intervention supported a republican revolutionary."

The combination of the socialist measures adopted internally in Egypt with the thrust by Nasser into southern Arabia during the '60s marked Nasser as an enemy of U.S. foreign policy. These developments were sufficient to alarm the U.S. despite the criticism "true" socialists might have of Nasser's reforms and those "true" revolutionaries might have of the Yemen war. Johnson is not a revolutionary purist. Nor are the Russians, who overcame their hostility over Egypt's suppression of communists enough to lavish enormous aid on that government.

The United States was forced to be more discreet in its support of Israel for fear of embarrassing its own Arab proteges, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, but American diplomatic and military aid during the Johnson Administration was undoubtedly of decisive importance to the Israelis.

Johnson Administration support for the Israelis came at a time when tension between Israel and Egypt was at a low point. The demands for war against Israel came much more from America's ally, Jordan, than from Egypt. The American government apparently felt no contradiction in simultaneously supporting the Israeli and Jordanian regimes, so long as it kept Nasser pinned down in the crossfire.

Until 1966, the U.S. preserved some hope for Nasser's conversion. Washington had continued to supply Egypt with massive amounts of grain, but this was abruptly cut off after January 3, 1966. The cutoff of grain created a serious crisis for the Egyptian economy. The seven-year plan gave way to a more modest three-year plan as investment was cut to pay for food imports. The U.S. condition for a resumption of the grain supply was Nasser's withdrawal from the Arabian south.

Egyptian policy right up to May 1967—the month before the six-day war—was undoubtedly one of avoiding a conflict with Israel. At Arab summit meetings her official position was that she was not yet strong enough to take on Israel and that she must continue for a considerable period to develop her military and economic power before such conflict was possible. This was not a very convincing explanation in view of the fact that Nasser was quite willing to drain off his military power in the Yemen war—a war which occupied one third of his Army and an equivalent portion of the military budget. Egypt continued to give lip service to the aim of restoring the Palestinian refugees and returning to the '47 boundaries, but

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her actions and serious political pronouncements departed from simple anti-Zionism on two points: (a) the main target was shifted to U.S. imperialism—opposition to Israel was based principally on its connections with the U.S.; and (b) the use of force against Israel was continually projected in terms of a defensive policy in the event that Israel attacked the Arab states.

II.

THE SIX-DAY WAR

EVER SINCE SUEZ, the Egyptian policy towards Israel has been very conservative. Nasser was concentrating more and more on domestic change and on developments within the Arab states and the rest of the Third World. Yigal Allon, Israel's Minister of Labor, in a detailed article on Israel's security problems published on February 12 of this year, noted:

> "While Egypt contributes most of the money for Shukairy's organization [The Palestinian Liberation Army] and permits him to recruit his membership in the Gaza Strip and to have his main office in Egypt itself, it has not permitted any hostile activities across the Gaza border into Israel since the Sinai campaign."

The Israeli defense force distributes a map detailing acts of sabotage by Arab countries against Israel between January 3, 1965, and June 3, 1967. Of 121 such incidents, only five are attributed to Egypt as compared to 63 for Jordan and 34 for Syria. There was not a single incident of sabotage from Egyptian land between February 1965 and May 27, 1967, a few days before the war, when an Israeli half track was damaged by a mine in the Kerem Shalom area. The Palestinians, Syrians and Jordanians put great pressure on Egypt during this period to permit fedayeen type raids, but Nasser steadfastly refused.

On the Israeli side, the prospects for peace were much better than they had been in the pre-Suez period. This time, the moderate Levi Eshkol remained in power and was not deposed by a hard-liner like Ben-Gurion as Sharett had been. During the four years which preceded the six-day war, Eshkol pursued a policy of ending the restrictions on Israel's internal Arab population. Military government and the hated pass system were lifted. With Abba Eban's appointment as Foreign Minister, Eshkol initiated a more independent foreign policy, less reliant on the United States, with serious openings to the Eastern bloc. The Eshkol government was accused of appeasement up to the start of the war by the Dayan-Ben-Gurion axis, which split from the governing Mapai to form the Rafi Party and espoused a much harder line. But almost no Israelis, including most of the "hards," wanted war. There was, by all accounts, a widespread and almost paralyzing fear in Israel at the prospects of another war. Israel, despite American support, felt more isolated than before, and the massive Arab armament made even a victory look very costly.

IF IT IS TRUE that neither the Israelis nor the Egyptians wanted the war, how did it come to pass? One reason is certainly power rivalry in the Middle East between the Soviet Union and the U.S. It had its own momentum, independent of the locals, and led during the period immediately preceding the war to a frantically spiraling arms race.

Local inter-Arab political tensions also played a major role. The leftist Baath regime in Syria took a militant rhetorical position in favor of all-out guerrilla war against Israel, based on what it claimed was the Vietnamese model. It was unfortunate that the Syrians had not read an article Dayan wrote after his trip to Vietnam. Although he avoided explicit criticism of the U.S. position, Dayan argued that the Viet Cong could not be beaten because they represented a popularly based national movement. But the Syrian Baathists had never managed to develop a popular revolutionary base in their own country, let alone among the Palestinians. The alternative was the Al Fatah terror raids against Israeli civilians, which the Syrians organized and directed. The Baathists ended up blaming the Egyptians for the lack of momentum behind this drive, and accused the Egyptians of peaceful coexistence with Israel. It is true that the Shukairy-led Liberation Front which the Egyptians funded was restricted by that government to frantic radio broadcasts. The raids themselves were conducted by the Al Fatah movement which the Syrians controlled.

The Soviet Union was forced to support the Syrians, even though they were pursuing what the Russians elsewhere would have considered a policy of adventurism. The Sino-Soviet dispute had boxed the Soviets in. They were under pressure to demonstrate their revolutionary sincerity and the Syrians played on this. In addition, the Soviets had been continuously irked by Nasser's unpredictable and independent style, and preferred the politics of the Syrians, which at least was based on a doctrinaire party and a revolutionary vocabulary. Burned by Nasser's "non-alignment," the Russians welcomed the existence of a regime to the "left" of him in the Middle East. The frequent use of the word "imperialist" by the Syrian regime may have satisfied visiting Soviet officials, but its primitive anti-Zionism was little different from that of its reactionary Arab neighbors.

THE SYRIAN ATTACK ON EGYPT'S left flank was exceeded only by Jordan's from the right. There was nothing "moderate" about Hussein's position on Israel. The daily incantation of the Jordanian radio and press held that Nasser was simply a puppet of the Zionists who had sold out the Palestinian refugees, while hiding behind the skirts of the United Nations' troops. Only two months before the six-day war, Andre Gromyko visited Cairo and, with Nasser, issued a joint statement. Jordan Radio Amman's comment on that occasion was typical:

> "The joint statement in no way referred to our main cause —Palestine. If this cause was not discussed and if it is now a secondary matter to Abd an-Nasir, what does this mean? . . . We, who are no longer deceived by thrilling words and embellished expressions, would have liked Gamal Abd an-Nasir and his new master, when they were drafting their joint statement, to have remembered that our Arab people in Palestine have been struggling for their right to a homeland for over eighteen years . . . that the fate of the Arabs depends on our nation's victory over its usurping Zionist enemies, and that this close link between the Palestine cause and the fate of the Arabs is more worthy of his excellent attention than the Congo, Vietnam and

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Rhodesia, which the divider of the Arabs remembered while ignoring our nation's most sacred cause.

It is no longer a secret that Abd an-Nasir has fallen into the camp of international communism and its plans to obliterate Arabism and its traditions, at the expense of our great national interest in Palestine and our unity, freedom and progress."

The pressure on Egypt to act against Israel had existed ever since Suez, but it became particularly intense after the Israeli retaliation against Syria on April 7 of this year, when six Syrian planes were downed. Syrian Chief of State Attassi responded by calling for "The Popular Liberation War": "From now on we shall lodge no complaints. We shall reply to aggression by crushing the bases and spring-boards of aggression inside the occupied territory." The Jordanian government, despite its hostility towards the Syrians, joined them in using this incident to embarrass the Egyptians (Amman Domestic Service, April 17, 1967):

". . . during the eight-hour attack on Syria, when enemy planes penetrated the Damascus sky [Egypt forgot] . . . about Abd an-Nasir's statement when the joint defense pact was signed, when he threatened Israel with the severest punishment if it dared attack. What was Abd an-Nasir waiting for after the enemy planes reached Damascus?"

On April 10, Amman radio highlighted a very significant report in Beirut's Az-Zaman on Egyptian-Syrian relations which, "quoting informed diplomatic sources," said:

". . . today, when Syrian Premier Yusuf Zuayyin and Foreign Minister Ibrahim Makhus visited Cairo recently, President Abd an-Nasir warned them against continuing to send fedayeen to the occupied territory for sabotage activities, thus avoiding retaliatory Israeli military operations against neighboring Arab states. Cairo stressed to the two Baathist leaders that at present it cannot engage in an overt battle with Israel since it has 80,000 Egyptian fighters in Yemen. Cairo also told the Syrian leaders that the Unified Arab Command has not completed its coordination operations and is thus incapable of interfering in any overt battles against Israel."

The same diplomatic sources added that Egypt's non-interference in the battle, even to the extent of not providing air support—despite close contacts between Damascus and Cairo during the battle—was due to Syria's refusal to follow Cairo's advice. But the diplomatic circles which disclosed these facts expressed surprise when Cairo refrained even from granting radio or propaganda support of Syria in the battle with a common enemy.

This last allegation appears correct insofar as it can be verified from the standard U.S. radio monitoring service. I encountered frequent confirmation of this account of Syrian-Egyptian relations on my postwar visit to Cairo.

Jordanian radio continued to hammer away at the theme that Egypt had betrayed the Palestinian cause, because of her involvement in Yemen. A report of April 13 stated:

"According to reliable information received from Damascus yesterday, Egyptian Air Force Commander General Muhammad Sidi Mahmud told Syrian officials *not to embarrass* Egypt concerning the implementation of the joint defense pact . . . Cairo's view, conveyed by General Mahmud to Damascus, is that the situation should be frozen."

Israeli radio confirmed these reports in its account of the arrival of Egyptian Premier Sidqi Sylayman at Damascus airport on April 18. According to Israeli radio, he explained his visit as routine and:

". . . told correspondents that he would discuss general Arab issues, and the Arab south question with Damascus authorities. He did not mention Israel at all . . . Moreover, Cairo continues to maintain its traditional stand that it is not obliged to intervene in every incident along the Syrian-Israeli border. Last week's visit to Syria by the Egyptian Air Force commander also changed nothing."

THUS, DESPITE THE STATE OF SEMI-WAR between Israel and Syria, and the Arab attacks on his own regime, Nasser reaffirmed the policy he had pursued during the three preceding years in his major address of May 1st. He placed emphasis on internal Egyptian development:

"The counterrevolution will remain until we achieve a complete social change, until we actually become a socialist society, and pass through the period of change from the state of exploiting capitalism and feudalism to socialism, and until we organize ourselves and our country."

At the same time he stressed the struggle against U.S. imperialism at the expense of unity with the conservative Arab regimes:

"We make war against imperialism throughout the world. We do this by moral solidarity with all the people who are rising against imperialism . . . Why are we threatened? . . . Because imperialism will never forgive us for opposing it and its pacts. We opposed the Baghdad Pact . . . We opposed the Eisenhower doctrine that followed the Baghdad Pact . . . Imperialism in our area will not forgive our opposition to its agents . . . We are now opposing Hussein and Faisal . . . We cannot imagine how dangerous they consider us. Not only are we a threat in the Arab world or the Arab south . . . they have even spoken to me about our menace in Latin America. I received the U.S. Department of State Undersecretary. He asked why we are causing them trouble, and said they are angry with us. Why? First, he said that we attack King Faisal and King Hussein . . . Then he said that we encourage the revolutionary elements in Latin America."

Nasser felt obligated to defend himself against the charge that he had betrayed the Palestinian cause:

"Many radio stations have been directed against us. King Hussein's radio station works for the American Intelligence Agency (CIA). King Hussein himself works for the CIA. . . . Fighter planes have a limited range. Our fighter planes can't reach the Syrian border . . . How can we send our planes from here? I am saying this for the benefit of the Arab nation, the Arab people and the Arab youth."

Nasser added that he had been willing to send Egyptian planes and pilots to be stationed in Syria, but that the offer was turned down. There was no specific promise of aid to the Syrians. His speech, in fact, tended to overlook the Israeli question:

"It is a big battle headed by America. Actually we are not fighting Faisal, Hussein, the Shah of Iran, or the imbecile Bourguiba . . . never . . . they are all tools in the hands of the United States."

His *pro forma* indictment of Israel was based not on the existence of the Israeli state or the problem of refugees, but rather on her support of Faisal: "Eshkol also does not want

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the British to leave the south. Israeli Premier Eshkol said yesterday that he wanted Britain to stay in the south and in Aden."

Radio Amman quickly leaped all over the speech as a betrayal of the war against Israel, consistent with Nasser's previous role:

> "Since 1956 Abd an-Nasir has been the only leader of an Arab state having common borders with the usurped part of Palestine who lives in peace and tranquillity with Israel. Not one shot has been fired from his direction against Israel. Likewise, Israel has not fired one shot in his direction, nor towards the international forces' camps. We hope that Abd an-Nasir is satisfied with this and with the disgrace he represents. We hope Abd an-Nasir is satisfied with not approaching Israel or its forces. His treason has reached the point of disregarding violations of Egyptian airspace by the Israeli Air Force, and by not resisting them.
>
> In his attitude towards Damascus, Gaza and the Tiran Straits, Abd an-Nasir is no longer a party to anything remotely related to Palestine or the Palestine question."

IN ISRAEL, INDEPENDENCE DAY, May 13, fell while the country was still in the midst of the Syrian crisis, and the government used the celebrations as an occasion to fire the populace to a mood of national resistance. This was natural enough. The odd thing about the speeches on that day, however, was that they centered their attack on Egypt, which had not as yet committed an act of war against Israel, not on Syria, which had. Jordan, which was most vitriolic in her attacks, was totally ignored. The criticism of Egypt did not relate to specific actions of that government, but rather to her effort to "unify" and revolutionize the Arab world. One of the strongest comments was made by Foreign Minister Abba Eban (according to the Israeli radio) when he said:

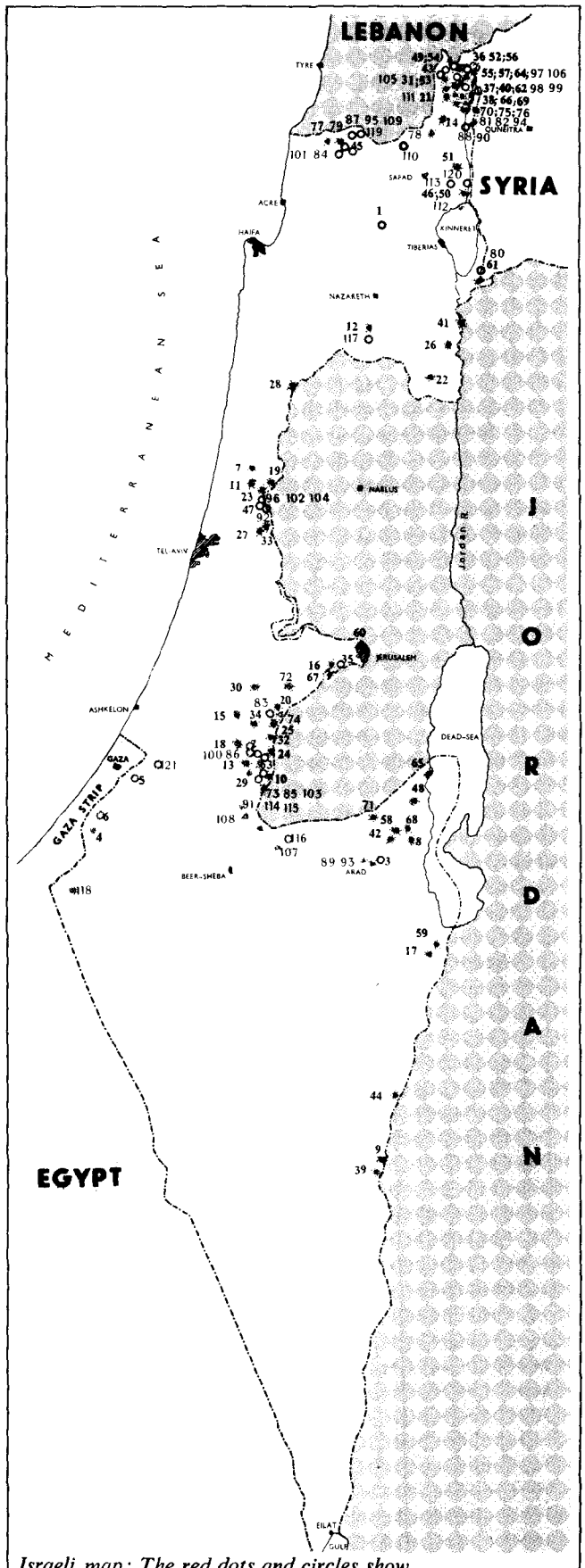
> "Abd an-Nasir's dream of enslaving the Middle East is fading away, and not only the non-Arab states oppose this dream. The Arab states also are not anxious to exchange British colonialism for Egyptian colonialism."

In this statement, Eban aligned Israel's policy with that of Jordan and Saudi Arabia. By implying that a unified and revolutionary Arab world was an automatic threat to Israel's security rather than outlining the particular conditions under which this would be the case, he blurred the issue and assumed the stance of the Arab reactionaries. This was the Israeli equivalent of Nasser's emphasis on the mere existence of Israel *per se* as an extension of Western imperialism, instead of providing the criteria for judging specific actions of the Israeli government.

The theme that Israel's security requires halting the drive towards Arab unity and revolution was stated in even stronger terms by Minister of State Yisrael Galili, in his Independence Day speech:

> ". . . in terms of growing stronger militarily and economically, Israel can look forward with confidence to the future. Nasir's dreams of hegemony have been proven false, and hostility towards Israel is no longer sufficient to unify and nourish Nasirist nationalism."

This emphasis on Nasserism is difficult to understand, given the fact that there had not been one attack against Israel on the Egyptian border in over two years, and that Cairo was obviously attempting at that point in the crisis to prevent escala-



Israeli map: The red dots and circles show alleged incidents of Arab sabotage within Israel.

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tion of the Syrian-Israeli crisis. It was also clear that the Syrians were not the puppets of Cairo, but were in fact quite deliberately attempting to force Nasser's hand.

Prime Minister Eshkol's Independence Day speech, however, did stress that the threat was from Syria, and he directed his threats of retaliation against that country: "It is quite clear to the Israeli government that the focal point of the terrorists is in Syria . . ."

Tensions within Israel became visible. The Rafi Party attacked the Eshkol government for keeping down the size of the Independence Day parade as appeasement. And Israel's Deputy Defense Minister Zvi Dinstein extended the policy of retaliation by adding that "the states which encourage these acts would not be absolved, even if the perpetrators came from another state."

On May 16, Egypt, apparently feeling the pressure, called for the removal of the U.N. troops, and the authoritative Al Ahram offered this explanation:

> "The UAR explained very clearly that it is ready to enter the battle against Israel if the Syrian homeland is exposed to danger following last week's Israeli threats, which reached the extent of a warning to invade Syria."

IT WAS AT THIS POINT that Ahmed Shukairy, head of the Palestinian Liberation Army, became prominent once more, mobilizing in Gaza and broadcasting his wild messages over Cairo's Voice of Palestine. In every one of these addresses, he emphasized his movement's close ties with the Chinese People's Republic, barely mentioning the Egyptians; and I could find no reference at all to support from the Soviets. In the days that followed May 16th, the Chinese ambassador was Shukairy's constant platform companion as he toured the Gaza Strip. In a rally on the 17th, Shukairy announced:

> "We now have among us the ambassador of the Chinese People's Republic. This great state today affirmed its readiness to support the Palestinian people in their liberation war. China has offered us arms without any condition except one—that the arms be used for the revolution and the liberation war to regain the usurped homeland."

This condition was an obvious criticism of the Egyptians and their Soviet allies, who had ignored Shukairy. But Shukairy was now publicly using the Chinese as a lever against the Russians. This created tensions with the Egyptians, who were firmly aligned with the Russians in the Sino-Soviet split.

After May 16, Shukairy pulled out all stops, and took a position quite different from that of the Egyptian government. Cairo continued to speak only of defense against aggression; Shukairy joined the Syrians in demanding the liberation of the "occupied lands."

Egypt said nothing about liberation.

THE DECISION TO DEMAND the withdrawal of the U.N. troops led directly to the six-day war. In a previous report from Cairo (RAMPARTS, September 1967), I reported that numerous interviews with government officials and journalists convinced me that Nasser did not expect the immediate withdrawal of the U.N. troops, and was caught off balance in the confused diplomatic situation which followed. It is my understanding that he anticipated a long season of diplomatic wrangling which would impose minor U.N. conditions in the Middle East, and get him off the hook on the Syrian question. But the surprisingly quick withdrawal of the U.N. force raised the Aqaba question, which had been buried since 1956. To have allowed Israeli ships to pass would have meant a sharp break with the whole Arab position on Palestine. As it turned out, this would have saved the Egyptians. But, with the blockade of Aqaba, Nasser entered the trap of Arab nationalist rhetoric.

In his speech to the UAR Air Force on May 22, Nasser traced the start of the escalation to the threats against Syria, and placed particular emphasis on the Independence Day speeches of May 13:

> "We had no plan before May 13, because we believed that Israel would not dare attack any Arab country and that Israel would not have dared to make such an impertinent statement."

In this speech, Nasser attacked the "Islamic" allies of imperialism, and went on to state that: "We cannot at all coordinate our plans with Islamic alliance members because it would mean giving our plans to the Jews and to Israel."

But two days later, Jordan's King Hussein announced that he had sent a representative to Cairo to offer full support. This was accepted, and the war against "Western imperialism" became merely another chapter in the shrill and misplaced war against Israel. Hussein and Nasser signed a joint agreement, and on May 29 Cairo radio reported that King Hussein had sent the following cable to Nasser:

> "The few hours we spent in your hospitality were immortal historical moments for they had closed the Arab ranks and unified national efforts to counter the challenge and aggression, shoulder to shoulder and hand in hand."

Thus Hussein, the "CIA agent," had become an ally in the war against U.S. "imperialism." If, as those close to Nasser suggest, he was troubled by the anomaly with which the Israel crisis presented him, he lacked the force and conviction to break his way out of it.

For the time being, Nasser has survived the debacle brought on by his commitment to an irrational Israeli policy. But the price of survival has been very dear. It threatens the most positive features of his "Socialist revolution." Its domestic program has nearly collapsed. Investment in industry has ground to a halt. The economic plan has been suspended, and the country is preoccupied with bare survival (which more than ever depends on foreign aid) rather than with development.

In his foreign policy, Nasser has virtually abandoned his campaign against the manifestation of Western imperialism in the Arab world, and is joining forces with the West's Arab agents. Before the war, Cairo radio called Hussein a CIA agent, but the Jordanian King emerged from the war a hero. Hussein scored a coup when Cairo agreed to participate in the Khartoum Arab summit conference. As a result of that conference, Egypt agreed to patch up its differences with Saudi Arabia, and to settle the war in Yemen. For Nasser it was a reversal of the foreign policy he had pursued up to the six-day war.

Because Nasser had failed to revolutionize the politics of the Arab world, he found himself powerless to prevent the destruction of everything for which he was working. The war produced a reversal of the Nasserite revolution on every front. The real victors were not Israel, which is still in danger, but rather Saudi Arabia and the United States, both of whom lost nothing and gained all.

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Symposium

[Chicago's "Black Caucus"]

Introduction:

THE CHICAGO NEW POLITICS CONFERENCE was the biggest and most representative gathering of America's left opposition in over two decades. It also turned into a most bizarre and improbable political happening. The convention confounded its own organizers, left most of its delegates in a state of confusion and confronted few of the issues it had been called to resolve.

The convention was also the most widely covered political event of the left in years. Most of the reporters went away in a state of shock. Their stories were generally extremely critical, if not downright disdainful, of the antics of the convention. To many of the reporters, the New Left had finally come to an end, not with a bang but by self-strangulation.

If at the convention there was confusion and chaos, it was no more than the confusion and chaos that is rampant all over America today. It would have been unnatural and yet very easy to have staged an orderly, controlled convention. Yet amidst all of the hurly-burly, the near riot atmosphere and the inflammatory revolutionary rhetoric, something serious was happening. The delegates to the Conference did represent real, ongoing movements that are in the middle of the intense social conflict sweeping America today and tearing it apart as at no time in history.

Behind the tactical maneuvering of the various elements was a for-real confrontation about serious issues of reform and revolution, black-white relations, and strategies for social change—as radicals and liberals, blacks and whites, tried to confront the classic question: "What is To Be Done?" After all the stories of the convention have been written, the editors thought RAMPARTS might perform a service by allowing some of the leading participants—representing the many different perspectives that emerged—to have their say about what they thought the issues were and how the convention dealt with them.

Carlton B. Goodlett

CARLTON B. GOODLETT *is a San Francisco physician and publisher of the Sun-Reporter, a California Negro weekly.*

THE WEEK OF AUGUST 29-September 4 saw the birth of a new political infant named the "New Politics." The labor pains were agonizing; the continuing threat of black dissociation, and the covert resistance of liberal whites against coercion (which to some resembled black blackmail) created many anxious moments for political activists who wished so much for the birth of this cherished infant.

While a "New Politics" has been born, it is still too early to surmise if the infant suffered grave trauma and irreparable birth injury. Parents and relatives can rejoice that the infant was not stillborn; that in fact new and enlivened political energy may have been released.

Two thousand white liberals and radicals have felt the full fury of the black rebellion. First, the Chicago black nationalists withdrew from the NCNP convention to form the Black People's Convention. Then, the militant black nationalists, even those who refused to register for the Convention, returned to the Black Caucus of NCNP and quickly established complete control over its deliberations. Some of them graduates of the Newark Black Power Conference, they presented to the full convention on Saturday two demands: one, that the Black Caucus, numbering about 300 of the 2500 delegates, be given equal representation on the steering and all other convention committees; and second, that a 13-point program reflecting "black revolutionary consciousness" be accepted on a take-it-or-leave-it, no-amendment basis by 12:30 p.m. After feeble protest, both demands were accepted by a nearly three to one majority —a victory which led the Black Caucus to a second test of white liberal sincerity. At the plenary session Sunday a third demand was made: that the Black Caucus be given a number of votes equal to that held by the 2500 white majority. This demand also passed, by more than two to one.

Grave doubts have arisen in some minds as to the wisdom of the NCNP accepting, in a manner which denied some democratic processes, the three Black Caucus ultimatums. The question

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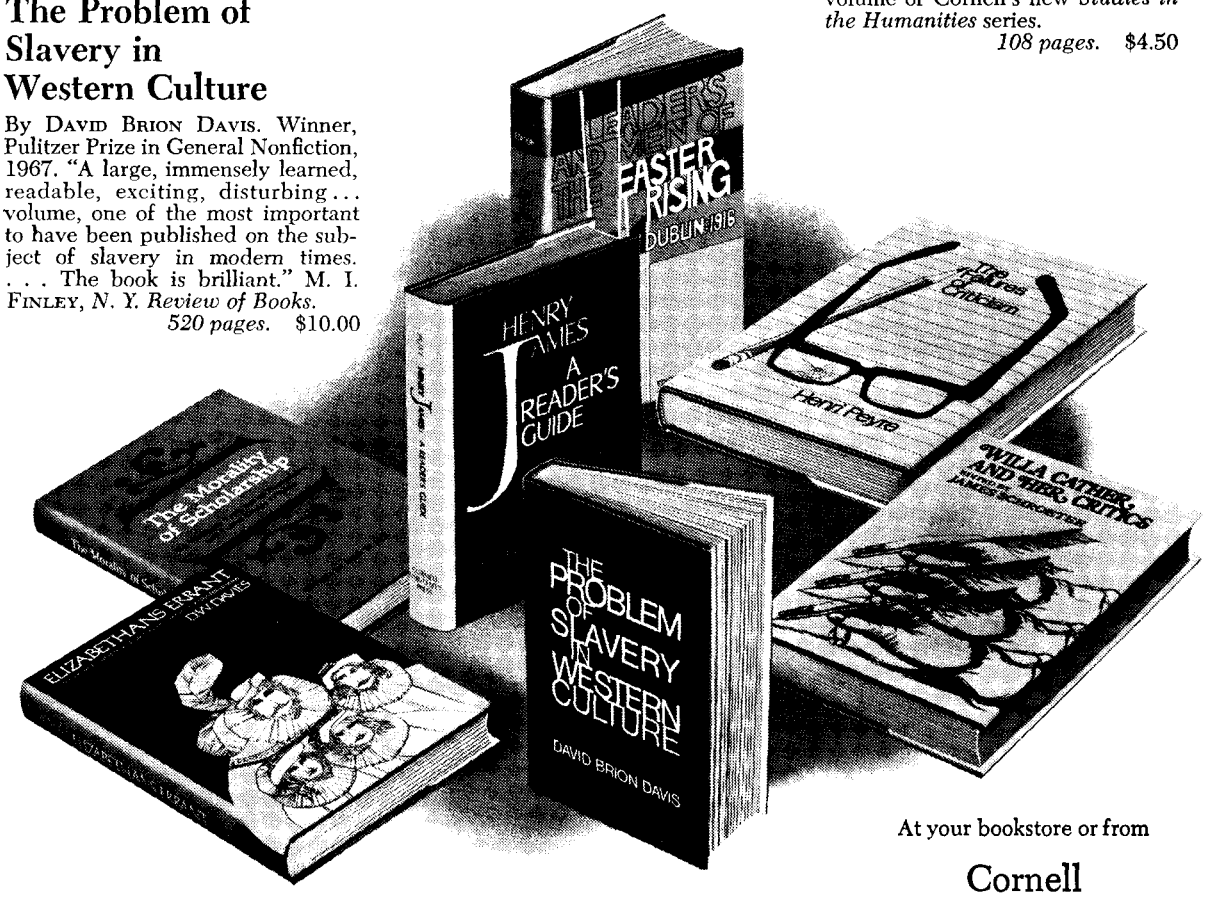

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must soon be answered: for whom does the Black Caucus speak? Although members of SCLC, the Mississippi Democratic Freedom Party and the Alabama Black Panther Party were active participants, there is not yet enough evidence to show that these militant blacks spoke for the majority of Negroes in America. It appeared in Chicago that they were speaking in the main for themselves or splinter Black Messiah groups. Their demand for 50 per cent of the NCNP vote needs further analysis. Were the militant blacks justified in speaking and voting for all Negroes? Without question, the perpetual suppression of black people in this country makes it imperative that they have significant power in making policy decisions in the New Politics, especially since the NCNP is committed to a program for black liberation.

The new and vital assertion of black self-determination brought the burdens of the NCNP into even sharper focus. But though the black rebellion represents that portion of the iceberg of discontent seen above the waves in America, the potential New Politics coalition below the surface includes liberal whites, disenchanted youth, senior citizens, poor whites, dedicated peace workers, enlightened labor, et al.

Those of us who represent a retiring leadership should be very careful that our criticisms are not the responses of aging and the fear of having left so much undone in the struggle for black liberation. We caution the white liberals who are prepared to rationalize and accept every demand of the Black Caucus that they temper their actions with a reason free from a sense of collective guilt for crimes committed in their name over past decades against black people. Accepting the Black Caucus' every demand might do as grave an injustice to a New Politics as the black bourgeoisie's antagonism stemming from personal inadequacies.

As the New Politics struggles for life, members must locally and nationally organize thousands of voters who desperately want political change. Somehow, a unified political coalition which includes all those concerned with the well-being of humanity must emerge. There was a "new beginning" in Chicago; it must be nurtured into a healthy and powerful political organism, with its components integrated and functioning.

C. Clark Kissinger

C. CLARK KISSINGER *is an SDS community organizer in a white middle-class district of Chicago.*

IT WORKED OUT PRETTY WELL in the end—no one was killed. Yet to write the whole thing off as another left lib pipe dream hopelessly out of contact with reality would attribute too much intentionality to something that just grew. The original concept was probably alright: a small working Conference of New Politics organizations concerned with strategies for local electoral insurgency. But once presidential fever set in, there was no stopping the process that followed. To set national strategy for '68 necessitated inviting the movement as a whole.

August '67 was just not the best time to begin rounding up black delegates as an afterthought. Although militant blacks had been represented on the NCNP Board, the association of folks like Stokely was purely nominal and revolved around the possibility of picking up some bread. The administrative staff of the Conference was white, as were most of New Politics folk heroes. Thus the stage was set for a collision between two disparate wings of the movement: one mostly white, powerless and based upon idealism and intellectual critiques; the other mostly black, wielding marginal power for the first time and based upon race and class.

It was fascinating to watch the "White Caucus" reacting to the demands of the black delegates. Feeling the whole meeting to be a waste of time, most blacks sat in their rooms drinking and playing bongo drums while the whites huddled, caucused, agonized, wept and orated over what to do. In the end they approved all the demands, both political and structural. And while the content of the resolutions was not the real issue at stake, it still warmed the cockles of my heart to see middle-class respectables voting to support all wars of national liberation at home and abroad.

The delegates who voted against the resolutions did so for many and complex reasons. First there was a contingent of white radicals who felt rather deeply that the levels of development of the black and white movements effectively precluded a working alliance at this time and who kept talking about setting up

...taking young black men to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia they have not found in Southwest Georgia.

MARTIN LUTHER KING

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an all-white organization to build in white communities. They buttressed their stance by trying to second guess the Black Caucus ("Won't they really have more respect for us if we vote NO?"). Second was an absolutely hysterical little band who kept screaming something about castration and self-flagellation. Third were the graduates of Civics 102 who couldn't understand why 200 delegates should have 28,000 votes ("This isn't democracy!"). It never quite dawned on them that whites had 28,000 votes because they had membership cards, attended meetings, sat in rows, and raised their hands when they wanted to speak. Blacks who seized whole sections of major cities, shot up police stations, and tied down several Army divisions that might otherwise be in Asia did not have membership cards, didn't attend meetings, didn't sit in rows, nor did they raise their hands when they wanted to speak, so they didn't have 28,000 votes. Fourth was a hardy group of idealists who upon meeting nationalists for the first time ("Charlie, it's your turn to be Nigger"), flipped out ("We oppose racism in all its forms"). Finally there were a few delegates who simply had a thing about one point or another (e.g. the condemnation of Israel).

The folks who voted YES weren't a lot better. There were many delegates who understood that black America had the only thing going that really scared the Establishment, that black America would be setting the tone of the struggle, and that the war in Vietnam was *not* its first priority. But others, desperately attempting to reclaim the lost days of black-and-white togetherness, would have voted for absolutely anything that any black delegate proposed. Still others slyly voted to give control to the Black Caucus in hopes it would vote in the "correct" political perspective.

The question of perspectives for '68 did provide an interesting submotif for the convention. During lulls between considering the resolutions of the Black Caucus, the White Caucus debated the running of a third ticket—apparently oblivious to the relationship between this question and the resolutions from the Black Caucus which they were mechanically approving. Considering the fact that most of the delegates came fully expecting to field a third slate, it was a minor miracle that half the convention rejected the idea. But this resulted more from the absence of an acceptable candidate than from the power of arguments made against it. Young radicals, who rejected a simple lashing out at the malevolent personality in the White House, were unable to communicate their concerns to older delegates for whom the opposing of Johnson in '68 was the moral imperative of the century.

Meanwhile, back home in Rogers Park nothing much has changed—no steps forward, no steps back. It does not appear that NCNP as an organization will survive, or be important. And the possibilities for a real black-white coalition still seem remote. Yet our own delegation got a lot out of the convention. Community people who had never before heard Forman and McKissick, who had never really grappled with the problems of national strategy, who had never been glared at close up by a black nationalist, and who had never seen the 17 Leninist sects in action before learned a hell of a lot. The arguing will go on ("Should we really have voted for those resolutions?") and we'll read all the snotty accounts of the convention in the respectable liberal press. But our basic task remains before us: to prevent a coalescing of reaction in white America and to set free the minds of young Americans.

Ted Weiss

TED WEISS, *a New York City councilman, received 49 per cent of the vote in the 1966 Congressional primary, running against the incumbent.*

THE RECAPITULATION of political conventions usually emerges as the tale of the elephant and the blind men. The Chicago elephant was certainly a stranger beast than any I've ever heard described; and it may well be that I was a rather blind observer myself.

Among my blind spots count these: I was a reformed Democrat, a liberal, at a convention comprised mostly of radicals. I have some confidence in electoral politics as a means to effective political power; the convention majority treated electoral politics with disdain and contempt. I believe in one man, one vote; the convention obviously was willing to compromise that concept. Finally, I believe that black people are as capable of spouting outrageous nonsense as whites and that I am under no more of

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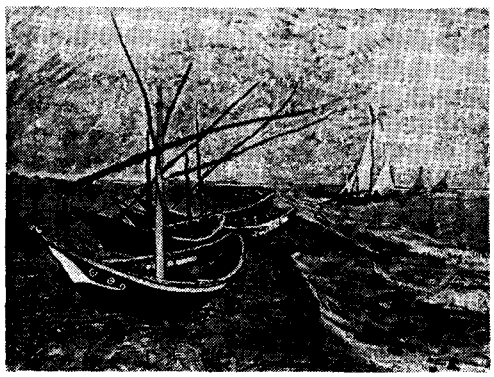

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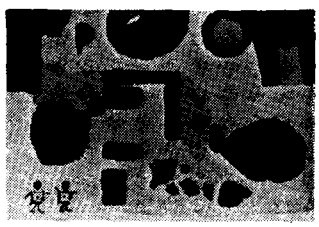

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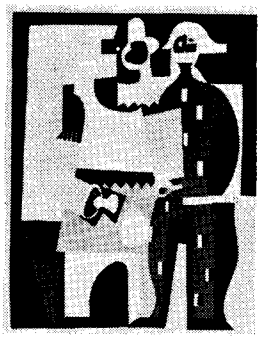

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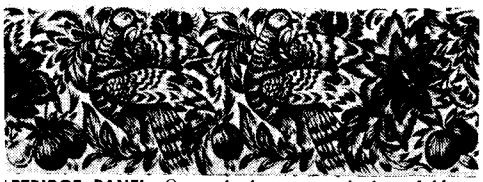

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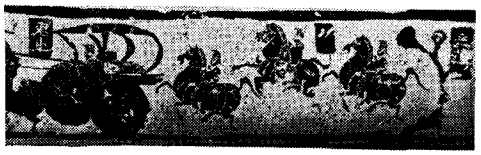

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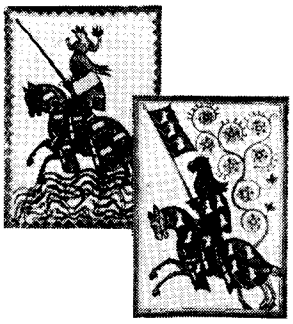

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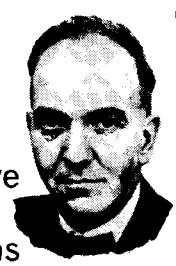

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an obligation to swallow theirs than they are to swallow mine.

Having confessed my own disabilities, let me mention just one which the convention majority suffered from: their absolute failure to really listen—to one another, to their keynoters, their panelists, to the broad American public which in ever increasing numbers is voicing its disgust with both the war and with Lyndon Johnson.

Robert Scheer, for example, was deservedly cheered when he told the delegates not to accept the "whitey" and "honkey" labels for themselves or for the white community if they wanted to be effective organizers.

They cheered Floyd McKissick, too; that is, they cheered his imperial entrance, his brilliant delivery and his words. But except for the rhetorical flourishes, McKissick delivered himself of a sane, sober, rather noble statement. "Freedom," he said, "cannot be given to anyone; black people have to win it for themselves. Whites must work in white communities to make it easier for black people to win their fight for freedom. The effort to coalesce must await a time and place of effective equality."

But it took me the better part of the week after the convention to come up with a viable theory as to why a bunch of the best young people in this country, fiercely independent on most occasions, could have behaved so supinely. It was not, in my opinion, an assumption of the generalized burden of the guilt of white America. Instead, these are the kids who, day in and day out, knock themselves out trying to restructure American society, working for the most part in the Negro ghettos of this nation. Rap Brown, Stokely Carmichael and Floyd McKissick may be talking to white America generally when they tell whites, with varying degrees of rationality, to get out of the way and let black people run their own fight against oppression, but it is these white kids who are doing the work that the black militants insist blacks should be doing. They are the most vulnerable, and so they reacted out of this vulnerability defensively and dishonestly. The Black Caucus, the only effectively organized group of politicians at the convention, played on this vulnerability majestically. It was no contest.

Political shrewdness aside, however, the moral position of the Black Caucus left a great deal to be desired.

Take the anti-Zionist resolution, for example. I am an American Jew who would find it impossible to trace my family past five generations. I fully understand the effort of Negroes in this country to recapture a sense of identity and to achieve dignity, individually and as a people. I will not, at the same time, however, treat with understanding any effort to trample on my sense of identity and my dignity. It may not be anti-Semitism, but it is anti-me as a human being and, from my point of view, that's equally unforgivable.

As for the political wisdom of the convention, I found it distressing that the delegates could not, or would not, understand that for there to be any real opportunity to deal with the problems of the poor, black and white, the war must be brought to an end. For that to happen, Johnson must go. That requires political action. And this was supposed to have been a political convention.

The convention could have spurred on the effort to dislodge Johnson. That it didn't was a setback for all of us.

From the point of view of NCNP it was a tragedy. Viewing it in the broader political spectrum, I tend to be more optimistic. The convention and its delegates did not create the deep national anti-Johnson, anti-war sentiment; but they could not extinguish it. For a few weeks it will be of general interest to speculate on what happened at Chicago. The theoreticians may keep at it until the next convention. But even now those who really care are beginning to organize for the 1968 drive against Johnson.

The disaster was strictly temporary.

Carlos E. Russell

CARLOS E. RUSSELL, *a community organizer for the poverty program in Bedford-Stuyvesant, was the chairman of the Black Caucus at Chicago.*

"WOOD ALREADY TOUCHED by fire is not hard to set alight." (Ashanti proverb.)

The pseudo-radicals, the liberals and the host of white journalists, who for the past two weeks have been peppering the pages of the white press with cries of "paternalism," "fraud," "a ritual of self-flagellation," and the "death of the New Left," have shown once again that there

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are in reality two Americas—one white, one black.

White liberal and radical America is engrossed in a struggle for peace in Vietnam and the retention of a "left" (white) Establishment; while black America is intensifying its struggle for its own liberation and survival, not only in America, but wherever blacks are oppressed.

The Conference on a New Politics was neither a fraud nor an orgy wherein whites castrated themselves to appease blacks. It was, in my view, a confrontation between whites and blacks—a confrontation on a white "turf but fought by black rules." It was also a confrontation wherein the ostensibly suppressed racism, the political and intellectual provincialism of the "white" New Left was tested. Those of us who survived are better off for it.

The reports on the Conference were purposely distorted. This country has been given the erroneous impression that it was James Foreman, H. Rap Brown and Floyd McKissick who led the Black Caucus. Lost in this version were the real strategists, the poor, unheralded blacks from all walks of life, who demonstrated that black America has come of age. Foreman, Brown and McKissick now have vivid testimony that their work in the struggle for freedom has fired the wood. And now it is not hard to set the light.

What did occur behind the doors of the Black Caucus was that many blacks discarded the white masks and gave white America a glimpse of their true feelings.

In my view, four essential things were derived from the Conference. First, the destruction of at least five myths: A. Black people cannot work together; B. Black people are polltically naive; C. Black people are organizationally undisciplined; D. Most black people are anti-Black Power; E. Black people cannot creatively exercise power.

Second, a black-white unity based on alliances around mutual self-interest.

Third, the recognition that white liberalism as a political philosophy is presently incompatible with the black liberation struggle and any pact between blacks and non-blacks must be between the radical elements of both groups.

Fourth, the establishment of a viable structure for community organizing.

There are two corollary benefits for blacks which emanated from the Conference: A. Whites were forced to give up some of their power. B. Blacks did not fall prey to the third ticket trap.

The first of these points is very relevant to blacks since it is very rarely that blacks have been able to wrest power from whites. This was a true example of the concept of Black Power.

The concept of a national third ticket, as I see it, is relatively meaningless to black people. This approach, I believe, would tend to co-opt blacks in the support of an illusion, thus taking energy, time and money from our main focus which has to be local organizing around issues pertinent to our communities and aimed towards controlling them.

The white liberal press cried because their dream of a third ticket as an alternate to Lyndon Johnson in 1968 was destroyed by the blacks. Here again was another example of the two worlds—whites interested in political alternatives and blacks with one quest: survival and freedom.

NCNP must now embark on a multipronged attack on the racist and oppressive society in which we live. We must be able to create enough pressure and confusion to derail the LBJ train

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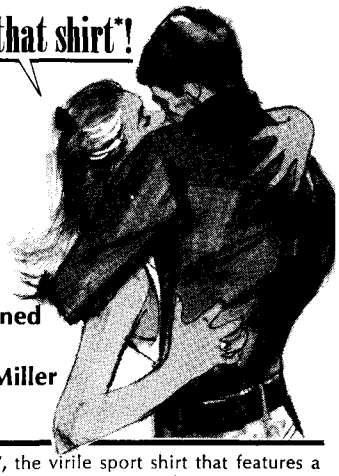

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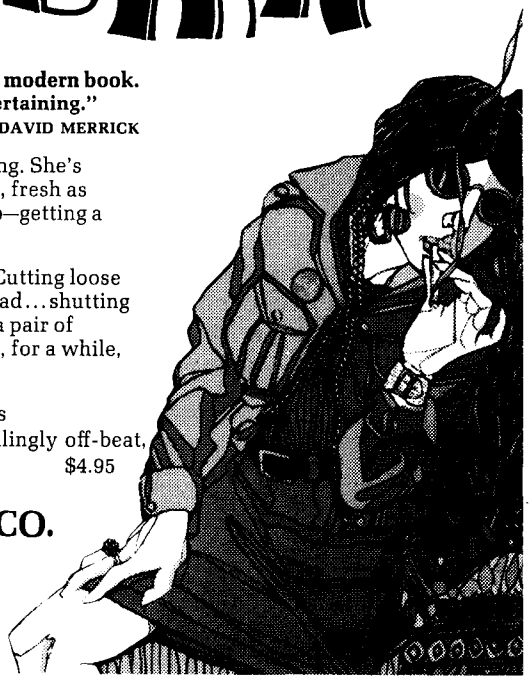

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which is leading us to the holocaust of a third world war.

NCNP must support, fund and man projects such as draft resistance, boycotts, mobilization of mothers, voter registrations in urban ghettos and in the South, local political organizing, unceasing attacks on the politics of racism and neo-colonialism, projects that support the black liberation movements in South Africa, Angola, Mozambique. If we are to survive, this is but a fraction of the task that lies ahead.

John Maher Jr.

JOHN MAHER JR., *a member of SDS, has worked in the national office of Vietnam Summer, and was elected to the new executive committee of the NCNP by the Radical Alternatives caucus.*

WHAT DOES THE SOUND and fury of the NCNP Conference signify? To talk seriously about the role of the Black Caucus in the convention, or the Communist Party, the young white radicals and the middle-class peace types, is to miss the point entirely. The public spectacle, traumatic and offensive as it was, does not deserve to be taken seriously by anyone, least of all by those who have committed themselves to the building of a new political force in this country. If we learned anything there, it was that this thing should not happen again.

To understand how the convention came about you must understand how the NCNP itself could happen. Start with a theoretician or two with appealing rhetoric and precious little experience about what's going on in this country and what it may take to change it. Add some money and more gall. Money for existing projects and sometimes desperate desire for new action bring in a few people who have done serious base work somewhere. Now launch the promotion with an ad in the New York Times, and you have your NCNP.

Carry on and imagine that a national movement exists, that the NCNP is or can become its center, and that a national third ticket presidential candidacy is the appropriate strategy for the movement you have summoned into being by an act of will. Top it off with a call in a flabby rhetoric which refuses to recognize basic questions over which the left is divided, and you have your NCNP convention—with one important qualification: by the middle of the summe even the most optimistic promoter cam to see that a third ticket presidentia campaign would in most states be disaster. So open the convention to othe perspectives. Why, if Lyndon Johnso from his throne of thrones can sing "W Shall Overcome," why then can't th NCNP high in orbit send down th signal, "Let the people decide"?

The people arrived. Little ladies re resenting old left organizations lor since dropped from the attorney ge eral's list, young white radicals prepari for the resistance, solid middle-cla people foot-weary from a long summe door-to-door march to petition a co gressman to come home and discuss t war far away, black men and wom burning with the anger of the ghetto a the war at home, all looking for G knows what. An act of madness w required to believe that their delibe tions could bring forth a common pr gram, an act of folly to imagine th those deliberations could even take pla in the Palmer House Hotel, under t bright lights of television, encumbe by incomprehensible procedure, plen sessions, resolutions, commissions a the other paraphernalia of a regu nominating convention.

Some fled to "caucuses," if for no otl reason than to find human solace and be somewhere else when the shoot started. Others kept to their seats stunned silence on the Grand Ballro floor; every kook and freak on the had his three minutes to come forw and declare how some notion wh seemed sensible to his group of 20 co provide the solution to dissolve agonies of a diverse and divided cour of some 200 million souls. Only promoters showed more arrogance.

But the show was over when the Bl Caucus demanded its fair share of nonsense, the rhetoric and the vc Hardly comprehending, barely car the white folks caved in and the big came down on a note of unity. Ame is moving. People who jostled each o in the hallways of the Palmer House learn to work together because surv demands it. Out of local work co national networks and will come, sc day, a national movement.

There is no other way.

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Maurice Zeitlin

MAURICE ZEITLIN *is an associate professor of sociology at the University of Wisconsin. He is the author of a recent book on the Cuban working class, published by Princeton University Press.*

Some of us took the New Politics convention call seriously because the left seemed to have broken out of its long isolation from American political life. The convergence of the civil rights and anti-war movements seemed to hold some promise of creating a popularly-based American left that could be relevant and effective, that could speak to people it had never before spoken to, in a language they understood, about what was of interest to them, that could articulate their private troubles, as C. Wright Mills might have said, and make them into public issues. The moment seemed to be correct for getting together people who had in one way or another been actively involved in radical politics and organizing throughout the U.S., so that they might share their experiences and learn something together that might help the common cause.

Unfortunately, the convention provided us with neither the organization, aims nor perspectives for widening the base of the movement to bring to power a government which would serve the general interest of the American people, rather than the peculiar interests of the privileged few who control it.

The convention demoralized many, divided where no divisions had been, and often made us look just plain silly. In fact, those who called the convention were not very clear about what they hoped to do there. And they brought together thousands who were even more uncertain, and some who, while certain, were either knaves or fools, or both, who had done and would do no good for the movement.

But this work—the ultimatum of the Black Caucus to accept their incredible "13 points" unqualifiedly, encouraged by the adolescent silliness of some, the manipulative indulgence of most, and the infantile leftism of many—was allowed to go for nought.

While the ultimatum of the Black Caucus was the immediate cause of the general failure of the convention, the real cause lay with the composition of

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the delegates—who they were and whom they imagined themselves to be. Members of a Black Caucus numbering some 150 people, certainly no more representative (with few exceptions, such as the delegates from the Freedom Democratic Party) of the black population of America than the 2000 white delegates were of "white America," and probably much less so, were able to impose their irrational will on the whites because the whites had no sense of their own goals or of their strength.

A nearly three to one vote endorsing a reactionary document of "13 points" containing meaningless rhetoric and scarcely a phrase of substantial programmatic content, was the convention's most notable result.

The content of the document was never debated; the vote was taken as a "symbol";—though of what was never made clear. Black militants who could demand from their comrades unqualified acceptance of their 13 points in toto (including an unseen and unknown group of resolutions from the Newark Conference on Black Power) can hardly think too highly of the value of having their support. Having gained that support merely by insisting on their "blackness" as a criterion of truth, can they then have gained respect for the white activists who would accept such terms? Can white radicals or liberals have a sense of genuine fellowship for blacks who would submit them to such a ritual of self-absolution?

The "debate" of the 13 points is worth emphasis because it laid bare a fundamental problem of the American left: the political incapacity of even those who count themselves among the most politically conscious. Neither those who called the convention nor those on the enlarged steering committee containing representatives of the assembled delegates, provided effective political leadership on an issue of such moment. On their desire to "let the people decide," the "people" never did decide nor did the convention get on with the important work it had to do. Two thousand assembled delegates allowed what they would officially say about some of the most profound problems facing the movement and the nation to be decided by some 150 individuals whose leadership and significance among black Americans they could not judge intelligently.

The delegates showed the fickleness and shallowness of the political views of many on the left. One day they rose to give a standing ovation to Robert Scheer because—one would have supposed—of what he had just urged, as well as because of the example his Community for New Politics has already set in the San Francisco Bay Area, namely, forging an alliance of equals between black militants and white radicals, each having their own genuine base in the community, without which any belief in unity is illusory. On the next day, they soundly booed him even before he spoke, when the chairman recognized him to speak against the "solution" (the 13 points). Scheer had been naive enough to believe that issues were being debated and had risen to debate them.

On the new black and white NCNP Board, perhaps more representative of the left than the initiating one, and commanding for that reason greater popular support in the ranks of the movement, a structure may have been established that will make our work more effective and provide the basis for organizational unity in the future. Whether these are illusory hopes or real possibilities will be shown in the work done in the immediate year ahead.

Eldridge Cleaver

ELDRIDGE CLEAVER *is a staff writer for* RAMPARTS. *His forthcoming book,* Soul on Ice, *will be published in January.*

THE RECENT NCNP CONVENTION was a case in which a potential ruling elite—white mother country liberals and radicals—went through the traumatic experience of having the form of power which they have traditionally possessed, more or less unchallenged, shattered and part of it seized by another more revolutionary, more powerfully motivated, faction—the Black Caucus.

The white liberals and radicals have long enjoyed a primacy in the socia revolution. They have been the ones tc formulate policy, to elaborate theory and to dictate the forms of struggle to be followed by black people in pursuit o their national liberation. It came as a shock to them to realize, and be con fronted with, the fact that blacks hav closed ranks and moved into a com munion and phase of struggle which the

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themselves either cannot or for some reason have not entered. Indeed, they even seem unable to perceive the legitimacy of what the blacks are into.

And so they came away from Chicago with their minds blown, confused, frustrated, and actually feeling abused and misused. On the other hand, the blacks came away from Chicago delighted, encouraged and stimulated by the victory, gained first precisely because of the reorientation in how they conceive of themselves in relation to the white liberals and radicals; secondly, in the strategy evolving out of this relatively new perceived relationship.

To put the seeming chaos and confusion in Chicago into an intelligible perspective, we must start with some basic definitions. First of all, we must define the present situation in America, i.e., the relation between black people and the various categories of white people, as a state of war. Black people are, and have been since the first slave was brought to these shores, engaged in a war of liberation from the racist system of oppression operative in this country. This sytem of oppression has, historically, been fluid. That is, the specific forms of oppression have changed, transforming from one into the other as a result of the interaction between the needs and interests of the oppressors, on the one hand, and the growing ability of the oppressed to mount a viable resistance. But the basic bondage and oppression of the blacks have remained constant. Slavery, segregation and now integration represent the three major phases and forms of oppression to which black people have been subjected.

At this point we must define the U.S.A. as an imperialist power holding the captive nation of Afro-America as a colony. In the rhetoric of the subject, the U.S.A. thus constitutes a "mother country," and since the only people in this country who are actually first class citizens are white, we define the U.S.A. as the white mother country.

In this sense, the term "second class citizen" is only a euphemism concealing the true colonial status of the non-white subjects of America. In actual fact, therefore, the relations between the citizens of the mother country and the subjects in the colonized nation constitute foreign relations, or relations between members of two separate and distinct national entities. This is still true even when it involves relations between the liberals and radicals of the mother country and the revolutionaries of the subject colony. When it comes to relations between members of the mother country and members of the colony meeting in the political sense, we are dealing, in the strictest sense, in foreign relations. The white liberals and radicals of the mother country dissent from the imperialist policy and activity of the ruling clique that has seized the machinery of government of their nation. The black revolutionaries, on the other hand, are moving to affirm the sovereignty of their nation, to liberate their nation, and to smash the power and control which the mother country possesses over the black colony.

When the representatives of two nations sit down to negotiate their common or conflicting interests, they meet as equals and the guiding principle is "One nation, one vote." Seen in this light, the demand of the Black Caucus at Chicago for 50 per cent of the votes is only an assertion of equal national status. The demand of the Black Caucus that the white mother country liberals and radicals endorse the Newark Resolutions, was merely a demand for a vote of confidence in the national ability of Afro-America to analyze the situation and formulate a strategy that will lead towards its own national liberation.

Jerome Grossman

JEROME GROSSMAN, *director of Massachusetts PAX, is a Boston businessman active in New England civil rights and peace movements.*

MASSACHUSETTS Political Action for Peace (PAX) and I voted against the 13-point ultimatum presented by the Black Caucus, in favor of a year of local organizing, against the third ticket, and against giving the Black Caucus 50 per cent of the votes in the plenary sessions. We stopped voting when our votes became meaningless.

If the style and methods used in Chicago represent the "New Politics," I am going to give the "Old Politics" another try. Under the cover of an "open convention," behind-the-scenes manipulation, intimidation and physical coercion, deviousness and psychological exploitation ran rampant.

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The Black Caucus did to us what they feel has been done to them. It parallels the summer explosions in the ghettos. The blacks cannot reach their real enemies, remote and impregnable, so they tear up their own neighborhoods and the few marginal white stores still remaining. In Chicago, they were tearing at the faces of their friends who were not remote and impregnable but were, above all, available. The whites who acquiesced and even cooperated in this tragedy not only lost their self-respect but also the respect of the blacks. One black said with passion in the Massachusetts caucus, "You [the majority of whites at the convention] proved that you are hypocrites and worthless. You did not agree with the 13 points but you went along because you did not want us to leave. If you whites had made demands upon us with which we did not agree and had threatened to walk out, we would have shown you the door. At least, we are honest."

Some of the points, though ambiguous, were not hostile. However, coupling them indivisibly with the demand for 50 per cent representation on all committees was clearly intended to be insulting and humiliating. I will not allow anyone to do this to me for any reason. If this is the price of union, I will not pay it.

Furthermore, those of us who work in suburban, white, middle-class constituencies could not adopt some of those points for political reasons. These points are counter-productive for organizing those who are only beginning to speak out in opposition to government policy. It would have been dishonest to have voted for those points in Chicago and to have ignored them in our political work in Massachusetts. Thus, from a political point of view, the Black Caucus and its white allies were asking us for something which they did not need in their organizing but which would paralyze us in our organizing and outreach. This is not the road to coalition, but the road to isolation from the American community.

I cannot see the basis for an effective coalition of black militants, young white radicals and liberal reformers, each representing quite different economic, political and psychological needs. Rather than attempting to force them into an ineffective structure, it would better them to run parallel courses with autonomy and independence.

Peter Weiss

PETER WEISS, *a New York attorney, was a member of the NCNP Board prior to the convention.*

IT WAS A FINE SET of paradoxes. It was a noble and goofy experiment. It was a test of much more than the whites' credibility in the eyes of the blacks: it was a test of the basic assumptions of those who came from far and wide to non-organize themselves, and they passed it with flying colors.

We believed in alienation and, boy, were we ever alienated! We believed in powerlessness, and no one could accuse us of having more power when we left than when we came. We believed that American politics is shot through with corruption and compromise, and there was plenty of both in the banquet halls of the Palmer House. We believed that whites are incapable of understanding blacks—how right we were!

And yet, contrary to James Ridgeway in the New Republic, our hope was not destroyed and we are not alone.

The fact that the black-white dialogue got off to a bad start, because the blacks asked taunting questions and the whites gave paralyzed answers, neither side really believing what it was saying, is not, in itself, fatal. The blacks were angry, largely for good reasons, and the whites were thrown. What is important is whether both groups, having agreed to work together, can gradually learn to talk to, instead of performing for, each other. (See the black power militant throwing his tantrum! See the white pseudo-radical beating his breast!) That possibility, according to present indications, is still open.

On the positive side, the convention was a great coming together of the feverwing of those who are made sick by our present society, with its murderous policy abroad and its anesthetized policy at home. It was good and useful for those who are burning with rage and shame at what Douglas Dowd calls "the fouling of the dream" to get to know each other and create a structure out of which joint action may come. It was good, in my view, that there was relatively little talk about Vietnam because, while it is true that if the war runs its course nothing else will matter, it is also true that if the war miraculously ended today everything else would still matter.

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It is plain silly to accuse those who came to Chicago on an "end to ideology" platform of having emerged without one. But it is relevant to ask what their program was. On that, a great deal more was said—in the position papers, the resolutions, the speeches (e.g. Ben Spock's first-rate, overlooked, premature inaugural address)—than the convention's critics have let on.

The question now, for '68 and beyond, is whether the minute fever-wing of those who would change what one of the convention's resolutions called "The Quality of American Life" will find some way of reaching and mobilizing the vast millions—probably the majority of the country—who are only in various stages of malaise.

This will require a good deal more than a dedication to "community organizing." It will require taking the romantic pap out of phrases like "participatory democracy," "creative disorder," even "revolution," and investing them with a content that can attract recruits and enable them to act. Above all, it requires what the convention seemed reluctant even to consider, namely, a new relationship between the New Politics and the old, because the road to power lies through such a junction, and if it doesn't want power, it isn't politics, no matter what its age.

At the worst of times, which this is, a country needs the best of people. Some of the best came to Chicago, did some foolish and some not-so-foolish things, realized how weak they were and went away with a common will to become stronger.

That is not the worst epitaph for a convention.

Todd Gittlin

TODD GITTLIN *is a community organizer with the SDS-initiated JOIN project in Chicago.*

DECIPHERING THE New Politics bash is like writing old style criticism of *Catch-22* or *V*, or *The Trial*. You burrow under one symbolic surface only to find another, then nother, then another. Finally you extract some meanings, but their call is always rationally at odds with the spirit of the disorder. The medium of madness is bigger than its messages.

The medium must then be judged as a whole. Did the convention justify itself? Should so many have traveled so far at so great an expense for so little sleep? Granted that the spectacle was instructive; but so is any B movie, if your sensitivities are finely tuned. Unfortunately, the convention claimed to represent the stirrings and movement of New Politics. Then it must also be judged by the commitments of New Politics. Did it nudge its participants toward a more profound appreciation of their proper work in changing America? Flatly, no.

The main significance of the event lay in its chaos. The fact is that hardly anyone knew what they wanted from it. In radical politics as elsewhere, when expectations are flabby, so are outcomes. Therefore, the main moral of the happening is that it should not have happened at all. Hardly any delegates represented durable radical movements back home. (The left has few standards for anyone's significance; thus, delegates from the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party were lumped with free lance Black Nationalists as "the Black Cau-

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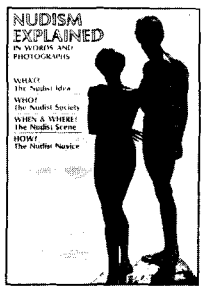

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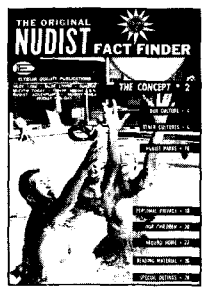

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cus.") Even the more experienced blacks stood for a mood more than for an organized base. Riding the crest of a violent mood, SNCC and other militants could at least take credit for a sharp blow at fat American equanimity; but whites, whether working at the ballot box or the induction center, could not lay claim to any such importance. Their work, however dedicated, has barely begun.

So, of course, the convention's politics were bizarre, penny ante imitations of the big time. The convention did not simply degenerate into a sick exhibit of vote hustling, racist self-flagellation, and false (that is, untested) unity. It contained no other possibility. Who could take this legislature seriously when it had no constituents?

Some tried to take the Conference seriously, whether to their credit or discredit is hard to tell. In their raw assertion of moral and legal authority, the Black Caucus offered whites more than an easy self-castration (a mutilation most whites could not resist, in the mad context). They forced down whitey's throat the plain truth that the movement's momentum is mainly black; that the movement goes nowhere but under black leadership. A tonic lesson for whites, if it can be absorbed. As many black delegates later acknowledged, the substance of black demands was in fact irrelevant to the issue at stake. Now, though, it is incumbent on black leadership to lead—and to encourage—white activists to do their own work without catcalls. Castrated whites won't mobilize a movement worthy of alliance.

For the white radical organizers, one modest success can be recorded. The distraction of a full blown anti-Johnson national ticket was averted, in favor of the convention's nodding endorsement of the patient, grass roots awakening of energies for the long struggle. The young whites resolved for the umpteenth time that the poor, students, workers, must be organized into movements authentically their own, movements that disrupt established power (military, bureaucratic and corporate) and carve out new, decentralized institutions of shared control.

But if this rhetoric finally prevailed, sweeping the middle-aged, middle-class convention with its youthful mystique, it has yet to become a reality or even a generalizable code. Precious little of this slow sort of organizing is underway. Most anti-war work has yet to act in the name of an ideology deeper than revulsion against the Vietnam barbarism. Lacking a better understood enemy than Lyndon Johnson, it will last only as long as this war does. Failing to grasp the dynamics of American empire-building, the anti-war movement will be in no position to dampen interventions already in force in Bolivia, Venezuela, and wherever American appetites are threatened.

To convert "local organizing" from slogan to program, and "Black Power" from symbolic floor fight to organized movement—these are the tasks retarded by the New Politics debacle. In the overheated atmosphere of the Palmer House, working radicals could neither explore nor explain what they meant by the long struggle, what they had done and what remains to be done, how their local work could be made less tedious, more enduring and more resonant. Anti-war adults exchanged the old left myth of ballot box change for the new left myths of local organizing and Black Power, without quite realizing what they had wrought, or what would be required of them. Certainly much more than easy applause for Muhammad Ali, the National Liberation Front and "revolution" will be required.

The Chicago damage will only be undone by a hard rethinking of narrow, weekend politics in favor of steady work for the 200,000,000 people who would have been properly repelled by the Palmer House delirium. If the new politicians come up with compelling explanations for the uninitiated, and new ways of embodying disaffection, then sometime far in the future there can be a convention with real business to transact and real power to convene.

Si Casady

SI CASADY *was formerly chairman of the California Democratic Council and co-chairman of the NCNP.*

TO THE SMUG and not overly perceptive commercial press, epitomized by the Chicago Tribune, the recent NCNP convention was an orgy of "bully boys and nuts" groping toward anarchy. But to those more capable of listening, Chicago performed a vital, although somewhat grim, function. It duplicated in 1967 the feat performed in 1775 by Paul Revere's horse—it carried a warning voice to the nation, and into the halls of the U.S. power structure.

The warning voice was blunt. It said old politics has failed. The needs of all the people are not being adequately served by the ruling American Establishment. There must be change, drastic and immediate, from above, or there will be revolution, drastic and prolonged, from below.

Chicago was a symptom of a sick society. It was also a symbol of what is wrong with America. Here in a great but dying city, on the shores of a great but dying lake, 3200 voiceless, powerless spokesmen for the "have-nots" met in the crystal-chandeliered ballroom of a palatial and grossly inappropriate hotel built by and for the "haves" of our society. Into this luxurious world came delegates who had never before seen the inside of a $26 Palmer House hotel room. They came in bluejeans and sandals, sleeping bags on their shoulders. In the lobby, other guests were coming and going, utterly unaware that their lovely hotel was seething on other floors with the hot dialogue of radicals who distrusted and felt alienated from them.

Thus the Palmer House became both an example of what is happening in America today and a warning of what may happen if the management doesn't come up pretty quickly with a formula for satisfying more of its guests.

This then was the message of Chicago Delegates were saying, through their behavior in a gaudy Hilton hotel designed for stuffed shirts, that the American Dream is more like a nightmare to them They were saying that the system which builds luxury hotels also builds slums and this does not make sense. They were saying they could wreck the Palmer House but they would not do so—not now, at least.

So they did not riot in the Palmer House. But they did not like what they saw. They have not revolted in America yet, either. But millions of Americans do not like what they see. They do not like the war in Vietnam. They do not like the corruption and complacency in Washington. They do not like a nation in which money speaks louder than people They do not like black people relegated to second-class citizenship.

This is the message of Chicago. The old order must change—or be changed

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ARE YOU A DISSENTING DEMOCRAT?

12,000 Southern California registered Democrats signed this ad which appeared in the Los Angeles Times on June 23, 1967

AN OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

This is to respectfully advise you, Mr. President, that as of this date we 8,000 registered Democrats, who helped elect you in 1964, are disassociating ourselves from you and your administration because of your conduct of the war in Vietnam.

We voted for you because you gave us hope of peace when in your election campaign you said: "We are not about to send American boys nine or ten thousand miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves." (Akron, Ohio, October 21, 1964) This was a pledge, Mr. President. Since then over 10,000 Americans and countless Vietnamese have been killed in this war.

Your administration threatens us daily with the prospect of an all-out confrontation with China and inevitably with the Soviet Union, leading us inexorably toward a thermonuclear holocaust.

Mr. President, we dissenting Democrats want a cessation of bombing and an end to escalation. We want an immediate beginning of *meaningful negotiations* with *all forces* involved in this conflict. We want out of the war in Vietnam!

We echo the observation of Democratic Senator George McGovern who said: "We seem bent on saving the Vietnamese people, even if we have to kill them and demolish their country to do so. I do not intend to remain silent in the face of a policy of madness."

We will, also, no longer commit the crime of silence. We endorse the statement of Republican Senator Mark Hatfield, who said of this war: "The freedom to stand opposed to the government's policy is *not* a privilege that can be withdrawn when the boat begins to rock. That freedom is the inherent *right* of a people in a democracy."

We have taken pride in the domestic accomplishments of the Democratic Party. But, today, our concern for our country and for humanity outweighs any rigid party affiliations.

MR. PRESIDENT, WE ADVISE YOU AND THOSE ON EVERY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT THAT, FROM THIS DAY ON, OUR CAMPAIGN FUNDS, OUR ENERGIES AND OUR VOTES GO TO THOSE AND ONLY THOSE POLITICAL FIGURES WHO WORK FOR AN END TO THE WAR IN VIETNAM.

(4,000 signatures arrived too late for publication)

Robert Vaughn—National Chairman

Our goal is one million signatures endorsing this ad to appear in major newspapers throughout our country. A petition with these signatures will be presented to the Democratic National Convention.

ONE MILLION DISSENTING DEMOCRATS CANNOT BE IGNORED!

DISSENTING DEMOCRATS
9889 Santa Monica Boulevard
Beverly Hills, California 90212

I agree with the statement made in this advertisement and would like to join other Dissenting Democrats in expressing my opposition to our present policy in Vietnam. You may use my name in connection with this statement.

Name (Print) .....

Address .....

City ..... State .....

Signature .....

Enclosed is a contribution to expand the work of Dissenting Democrats throughout the United States $ .....

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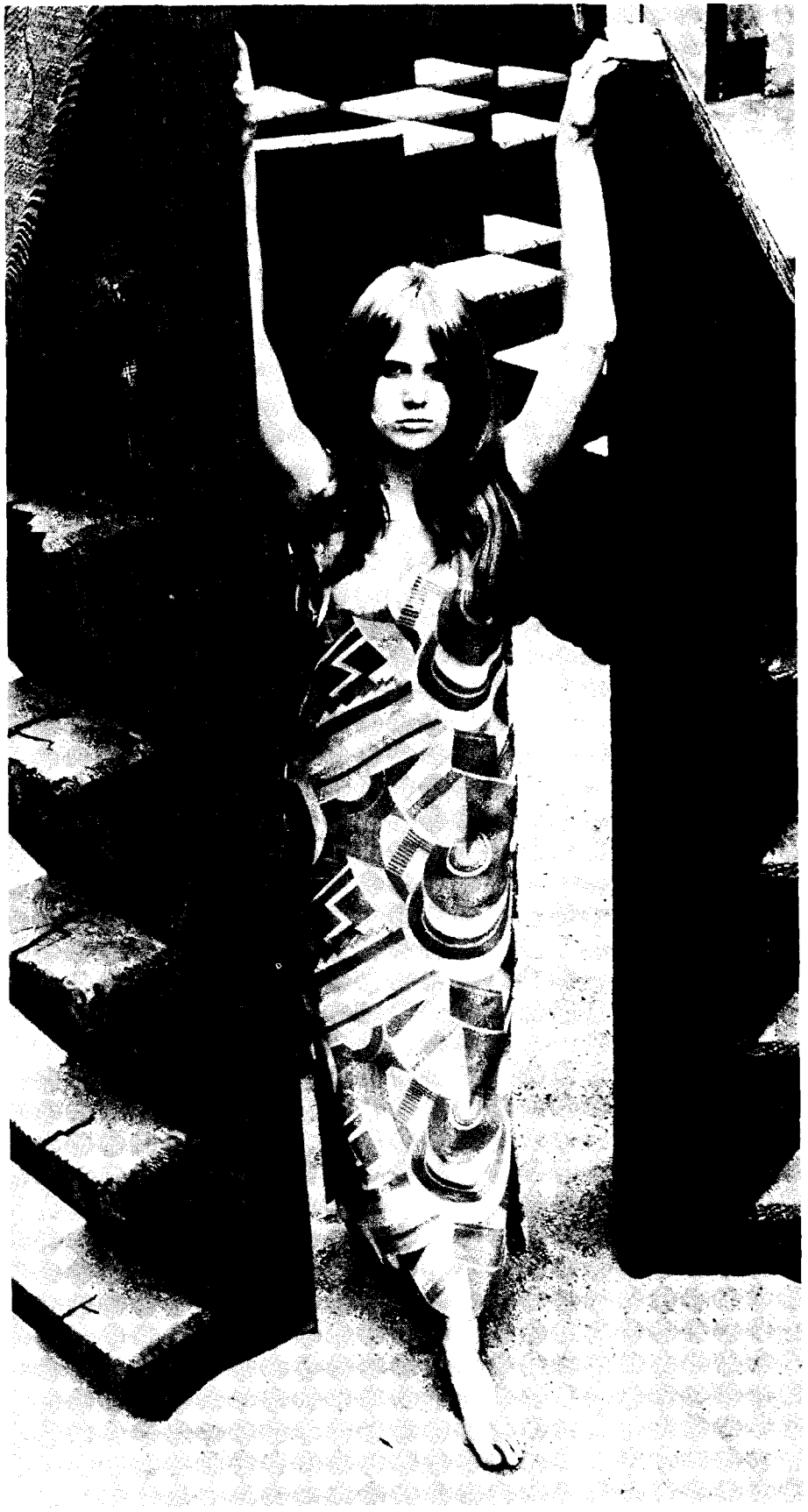

A PROPOSITION

A wild new thing is about t
happen: the mad, mod scene
about to witness the birth of
fantastic new magazine destine
for greatness. Its name is A
Garde.

As its name implie
Avant-Garde will be a forwar
directed, daring, and wildly h
donistic magazine. It will repo
on every aspect of the ebulli
new life-style now emerging
America, and it will do so with
put-ons and no inhibitions.

The pages of **Avant-Gar**
will explode with biting satire, i
cisive profiles, audacious repo
age, lush graphic art, conscio
ness-expanding fiction, and poet
that *speaks*. **Avant-Garde** w
cover Art, Politics, Science, a
every other subject of interest
readers of superior intelligen
and cultivated taste. It will be
bimonthly of:

—*beauty*, bringing to graphic
a transcendental new kind of hig

—*truth*, eschewing platitudes a
really telling it like it is; and

—*love*, unabashedly reveling
the One Universal Ultimate Goo

In short, **Avant-Gar**
will be a hip, joyous, beaut
new magazine. It will be the *vo*
of the Turned-On Generation.

Perhaps the best way
describe **Avant-Garde** for you
to list the kinds of articles it
print:

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